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THERESE: SAINT OF A LITTLE WAY



THIS BOOK HAS BEEN READ AND APPROVED AT THE CARMELITE CONVENT OF LISIEUX

FOR THE SAKE OF SIMPLICITY OF APPEARANCE AND EASE OF READING, FRENCH ACCENTS HAVE BEEN OMITTED FROM GIVEN NAMES.



SŒUR THERESE AS A NOVICE AT THE AGE OF FIFTEEN

Therese:

SAINT OF A LITTLE WAY



by FRANCES PARKINSON KEYES



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lessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.

ST. MATTHEW V, 6 AND 8.



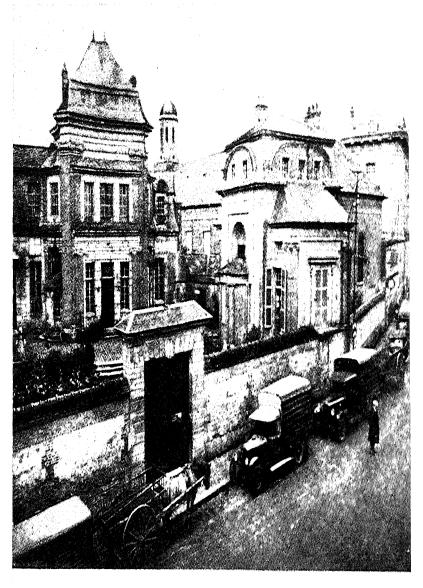
THERESE: SAINT OF A LITTLE WAY





NOTRE DAME DU PRÉ





THE ABBAYE DES BÉNÉDICTINES AS THE AUTHOR FIRST SAW IT



I

T SEEMS long, long ago that I first tugged at the iron bell pull outside the huge locked door of the Abbaye des Bénédictines in Lisieux, and was somewhat doubtfully admitted to the courtyard by Gertrude, the old portress.

Although it seems so long ago, I remember everything about it very clearly, probably because it meant so much to me from the beginning. I was greatly harassed by various problems and difficulties just then and I had undertaken, with many misgivings, a writing assignment which I feared was beyond my powers. But, as I sat waiting, while Gertrude went to inquire whether the Mère Hôtelière would receive me, I somehow felt that, at last, I had found a haven such as I had long sought in vain.

The courtyard was completely still; no sound from the busy rue de Caen penetrated to it from without and no one disturbed its serenity from within. It revealed itself as spacious, with linden trees forming a double row on either side of a graveled walk. Beyond them stretched out grass plots bordered by shrubbery and flowers, more linden trees, and brick walls. Behind me, surmounting the huge locked door and spreading out on either side of it, was a solid brick structure of prerevolutionary style; this, I knew, was now a hôtellerie, where a few privileged pensioners and paying guests were installed; but originally it had been a school—the school which

Therese Martin, later known to the world as the Little Flower of Jesus, had attended as a child. On one side of me, crowned by a small tower, rose a sturdy little chapel; this, I knew, was the sanctuary where the little Saint had made her First Holy Communion. Directly in front of me extended an ancient Norman building, gabled, half-timbered, red roofed—the abode of the novices. I sat and feasted my eyes upon it, enveloped in my new-found sense of peace.

There was a soft shuffling sound across the gravel. Gertrude was returning, smiling less doubtfully now. Yes, the Mère Hôtelière would speak to madame; would madame give herself the trouble of coming to the petit parloir? I followed the little old portress across the courtyard into a beamed dining room, where the escutcheons of all the abbesses of Notre Dame du Pré formed a frieze around the high wall. Then I went through a corridor into a tiny bare antechamber and sat down before a grille.

Almost instantly the dark curtains behind it parted, disclosing a distinguished personage. The black veil and white wimple of the Benedictine Order framed a fine face; the serge habit was worn with dignity and grace. I had the feeling that no essential of my character would be unknown to this nun by the time she had brought our conference to a courteous yet decisive close; but I also felt that her understanding would be tempered with kindliness. Her expression was grave, but it was not severe; her color was rich and warm; and her dark eyes, at first noncommittal, began to glow as I told her, rather haltingly, why I had come to Lisieux: with the hope of meeting persons who had known Therese Martin in the flesh, of talking to them about her, of visualizing the background of her girlhood, the setting of her vocational life and the atmosphere of her faith; then, having done so, of writing her biography.

"It was not my idea in the first place," I told the Mère Hôtelière frankly. "It was the idea of a friend in whose judgment I have unbounded confidence. She knew I had been to Lisieux before and that it had greatly impressed me, though I had given my feeling no form. She felt I should return and write here. When I reminded her that biographies of Saint Therese had already been written by great artists and great ecclesiastics with whom I could not hope to compete, she retorted that she was not suggesting either a work of art or a theological treatise; she was suggesting a story which would be written by an average woman about another woman whose life was apparently of only average opportunity, but who had within herself something which glorified it. My friend insisted the first publisher to whom I mentioned such a biography would send me off to write it.

"And she was right. He asked me to be on my way at the first possible moment. As it did not seem to me a propitious time to leave my family, I conferred with my husband and my sons. Without a dissenting voice, they urged me to go. Really startled at the turn events were taking, I consulted an eminent ecclesiastic. He said he would be pleased to see me undertake such a mission, that the results might well be for the benefit of multitudes and for the glory of God. I began to feel it was indicated that I should come to Lisieux.

"Therefore, I have done so. I have brought some letters of introduction with me. I hope they will be satisfactory. I also hope, ma mère, that you will let me stay at the Abbaye while doing the work with which I have been entrusted."

During the time that I*had been talking to the Mère Hôtelière, I began to feel that the project on which I had embarked with such misgivings was no longer an isolated design. I felt that through her tacit approval it had become part of a great pattern, one fragment of which I might be destined to weave. But I had interpreted her attitude by her manner rather than by anything she said or did. In fact, she made no immediate comment on my plan or on the events that had precipitated it. Her first remark was highly practical.

"At the moment, there are only two rooms free in the hôtellerie. I do not know whether either of them would suit

you. But I will send you to see them. Afterwards, I should like to have you return here and tell me whether you would be satisfied."

The rooms were very much alike: each was red tiled, each chintz curtained, each dominated by a carved Norman armoire. Two days later I was installed in the hôtellerie, where a thoughtful effort had obviously been made to insure my comfort. But my greatest privilege was not revealed until later in the day.

The Mère Hôtelière led me through the courtyard to a small antechamber beside the great locked door. A square of fresh matting had been laid on the red-tiled floor; the beamed ceiling was newly whitewashed. Against the paneled wall a low console had been placed with precision between two straight-backed chairs; in a declivity of the wall hung a small crucifix.

"If madame will be pleased to enter," said the Mère Hôtelière, indicating another door near the console.

She threw it open. I stood on the threshold of a room of noble proportions, as high as it was broad—all of twenty feet—and half again as long. Two tall shuttered windows surmounted the paneling of the wall against the street. Two others, equally tall, on the opposite side of the room, were thrown open on the courtyard garden. In the center of one of the other walls stood the customary cupboard of walnut, but more massive, more richly carved than those in the upstairs chambers; in the center of the other was a fireplace, with a snowy statue of the Virgin of the Consecration between two candelabra. The pictures on these walls were arresting: one represented the cloister of a convent, with a nun kneeling before a crucifix at the end of it. Another represented a smiling child with a pleasant face framed in long curls.

"This was the refectory of the boarding school when the child Therese came here to school," the Mère Hôtelière said gently. "It was here that she had her lunch every day with her

young companions. See, that is her picture at which you have been looking, done by a member of our own Community, Mère St. Léon, as was also the little painting of our cloister. You will enjoy seeing this Mother later on, and she may be helpful to you, for she herself was one of Therese Martin's teachers. But first you must get settled. It has occurred to me that you might care to use this room to write in."

"That I might care!"

"Come, come, I shall not rent it to you, that is understood. Such a room is not for rent. But I will lend it to you. You may have a writing table beside one of the windows overlooking the garden; you may put your papers in the *armoire*. I hope you will be happy in this room and at peace. I believe that the work that you do here will be blessed."

For nearly three months this old refectory where the child Therese came every day for years was my study—and my sanctuary. There were days when I simply sat gazing at the scene before me—at the Sœur Converse who appeared for a flashing instant at the gabled window of the old Norman building, her veil as white as the long linen sheet she was shaking out; at the airplanes soaring above the moss-grown roof; at the swallows circling and rising and darting away in the distance, dark against the rosy clouds drifting across the clear blue sky. But those days I was also thinking my story out. And there were many others when I wrote from early morning until late at night, groping my way at last across the empty courtyard after the lights in the chapel had gone out and all the Abbaye was steeped in stillness.

There were still other days when I was elsewhere in the convent much of the time, conferring with the Mère Hôte-lière or the Mère Prieure or with one of the Mothers who was a teacher there when Therese Martin was a pupil. During the course of these conferences, I listened to many stories, not only about the little Saint, but about the great abbesses—the

Countess de Lesceline, cousin-german of William the Conqueror, who founded the Abbaye; Madame de Matignon, Madame de Valinglart, Madame de Crequi....

I was especially intrigued with the story of Madame de Crequi. She was elected to office immediately before the French Revolution, and she and her nuns suffered untold hardships and persecution during the next dreadful years. Finally they were driven from their Abbaye and imprisoned. They were obliged to flee as refugees, in different little groups; these groups did not see each other nor hear from each other. It was nearly twenty years before Madame de Crequi was able to return to her convent, with a few of her spiritual daughters. Then she accomplished her purpose, first by renting the Community's own property and then purchasing it from a hostile government. It was thirty years before the Community was reassembled, but everything it had owned was eventually recovered except the chapel, which became the parish church of St. Désir. And a new chapel was built to take the place of this. So the great abbess had the joy, before she died, of living in peace and harmony again with her nuns under the shadow of their ancient cloister.

As the nuns told it to me, this was a very stirring story. But it was reassuring to feel that it was ancient history, that nothing of the sort could ever happen again.

Because the nature of my work seemed to indicate it, I was permitted to acquaint myself with the various buildings which made up the convent quadrangle: not only the eight-teenth-century boarding school, but the seventeenth-century grand bâtiment—containing the kitchen, the nuns' refectory and the chapter house—and the fifteenth-century vieux bâtiment—containing the linen rooms, the bakery and the bindery. And, of course, I went constantly to the "new" chapel which had been erected under the leadership of Madame de Crequi, to take the place of the "old" chapel, now the parish church of St. Désir.



THE CHURCH OF ST. DÉSIR FROM THE RIVER TOCQUES

It was still possible to enter this church at the rear from the convent quadrangle, which it adjoined, and sometimes I did so, stopping to rest and pray for a few moments, and then going out through the great courtyard in front of it to the rue de Caen. The courtyard of St. Désir was very different from the courtyard of the Abbaye. There were no linden trees in it, no shaded walks, no blossoming plants; it was austerely paved throughout, and, in the center of it stood a huge crucifix, the tallest, I think, that I have ever seen—or perhaps it only looked that way, towering as it did above the expanse of bare stones. I was impressed by this courtyard too, but I never wanted to linger in it as I did in the other. I went on—to the cozy little cafe across the street, to the antiquaire's around the corner, or over the bridge which spanned the Touques and led to town.

I learned to know the town very well—not only the "sights," such as the Maison de la Salamandre and the Salle Dorée and the Inn of the Petit Marquise and the rue de Fevres, which made Lisieux a ville musée in the same sense as Rouen; but also many delightful private houses, thrown open to me with characteristic Lexovian hospitality. I was very grateful for this hospitality, both because it gave me the warm and happy feeling of being among friends, whose bounteous tables and pleasant drawing rooms offered me refreshment and enjoyment when my day's work was done; and because it enabled me to visualize the Martins' charming and cultured way of life at Les Buissonnets, which, of course, I also visited. After all, Lisieux was the home of a Saint before it became her shrine and I needed to know it as such.

There were days when, in the company of my new-found friends, I "assisted" at the great religious festivals which still dominated the life of the little city, as they did when Therese Martin was a child—the Corpus Christi processions, the all-day galas following the celebration of First Holy Communion. There were still other days when I went further afield—to Alençon, where Therese was born; to Trouville, where

she first saw the sea; to Bayeux, where she went to beg permission of the Bishop to enter Carmel at the age of fifteen. And I saw Normandy not only as Saint's country, but as Conqueror's country: Falaise, where William was born; Dives where he embarked for England; Caen, where he built the first magnificent Gothic structures-all these could be reached within an hour and not infrequently were. The great grim castle of the first, the peerless inn of the second, the churches and palaces of the third became familiar stamping ground. I visited them all in congenial company, under ideal conditions. But after all, I did not need to leave the Abbaye for reminders of either the Conqueror or the Saint; he had given the land for it; she had beatified the buildings. Always I returned to the refectory with rejoicing. Even in the act of lifting the latch, I felt that this was the scene of ultimate inspiration. The hope expressed by the Mère Hôtelière on the first day-that I might be happy there and at peace-was amply fulfilled.

On my birthday, which occurs in July, we had a fete of our own. I invited to luncheon six of the ladies who had been so kind to me-among them Madame Noel, the wife of the sousprefet and Madame Cailliaux, the wife of the Attorney General-and gave them a typically American meal. The table was decked with beautiful old crested linen and beautiful old crested silver-part of Madame de Crequi's dowry; also with a set of quaint old china, representing the amourous history of the Sieur de Framboisie. After my guests had gone, the Mère Prieure and the Mère Hôtelière came to see me: the Community would like to offer me the porcelain service as a birthday present, the Prioress said; after all, the story it depicted was not quite suitable for a convent. But perhaps, for my personal entertaining.... I knew that this porcelain, like the silver and the linen, was part of the Abbaye's treasure; although I was infinitely touched, I hesitated to accept it. However, the Prioress was insistent; and, as if to offset the frivolous effect of the Sieur de Framboisie's adventures, she gave me a rosary of silver and ebony, a Benedictine crucifix and the silver medal of St. Benedict. These gifts lent a touch of solemnity to the occasion; but it closed on a lighter note. The Mère Hôtelière had brought her present in a shoe box. It was opened to disclose a doll, dressed in the Benedictine habit, correct to the last detail, and equipped with a lantern which was a miniature of the one the Mère Hôtelière carried herself, when she came late at night to unbolt the great door for me, after one of my festive outings.

All in all, it was a delightful birthday, but it was only one of many happy days. Indeed, during the entire course of the summer, I had only one disturbing experience, and I did not attach too much importance to that. I dreamed that I was standing in the cobblestone courtyard of St. Désir, before the tall, gaunt crucifix, which was silhouetted against a flaming sky-not the rosy sky of a calm and beautiful sunset, but one which created the dreadful impression that all the world was on fire. And then suddenly, the noble structures beyond the crucifix began to crumble and fall-the church itself, and the quadrangle of the convent, and all the buildings round about. They fell with a terrible crash, and afterwards there were only ruins where they had stood, many for hundreds of years. They all fell, so that there was devastation on every side. And finally, nothing was left as it had been except the crucifix, black against a flaming sky....

I woke, crying aloud, and I slept no more that night. The next morning, because I wanted to rid myself of haunting horror, and because it is always easier to do so after the mind has been unburdened and the spirit assuaged, I told the Mère Hôtelière what had happened. She agreed that it was strange and terrible; but she urged me not to be upset by it. After all, everyone had strange and terrible dreams sometimes, and they were inexplicable. But they had no importance or significance. They were only dreams. They were not visions....

She spoke so quietly and convincingly that I was immediately calmed. We did not refer to the matter again and noth-

ing else happened to mar the serenity of the summer. With belief in the fulfillment of the Mère Hôtelière's prayer—that the writing I had done was singularly blessed—I dedicated the story I had written

TO ELEANOR CARROLL

WHO FIRST VISUALIZED THIS STORY AND

BEGGED ME TO WRITE IT, AND TO

THE MERE PRIEURE, THE MERE HOTELIERE, AND ALL

THE COMMUNITY OF THE BENEDICTINES OF LISIEUX

IN WHOSE MIDST I DWELT WHILE I

STROVE TO FULFILL THE TASK THAT WAS

ENTRUSTED TO ME WITH SUCH

UNIVERSAL AND TOUCHING CONFIDENCE

The book was published the following spring under the title of written in heaven. This title referred to the glad exclamation of Therese, when she first became conscious of Orion, blazing high above her: "Look, Papa! Look quickly! There is a T in the sky. It must stand for Therese. My name is written in heaven!" This exlamation is world-famous and it never occurred, either to my publishers or to me, that it might be misinterpreted. Nevertheless, many readers and some reviewers did misinterpret it; they thought I was referring to my own happy experience while writing the Saint's biography. This viewpoint was, of course, incorrect, so incorrect that certain valued advisers thought the title should be changed, to prevent continued misinterpretation. But the inexactitude never troubled me; though the readers and the reviewers had given the title a meaning I had not thought of previously, they only caused me to wonder why I had not.

For I was, in truth, very happy that summer which seems so long ago. And I came closer to heaven than I ever had before.

When I went to Lisieux to write the life of little Saint Therese, I regarded the assignment as an isolated one. I had never done any writing of a religious character before and I did not expect to again. Nevertheless, when I said good-by to my new-found friends, both in the cloister and in the world, I somehow did not feel the farewell was final. So I was not astonished—nor were they—when I returned the following year on an assignment to cover the Eucharistic Congress and the visit of Cardinal Pacelli, now Pope Pius XII.

This time I took my car and my secretary with me and my visit assumed a more formal aspect generally. The French authorities did everything in their power to make my arrival at Cherbourg as pleasant as possible. Two officials were on hand to welcome me; one carried an enormous white paper cornucopia filled with well-wired flowers; the other wore a tricolored armband and presented a communication bearing an imposing letterhead, out of which fluttered a small sticker. This sticker proved to be by far the most important accessory of my welcome; it was what our French friends call a coupefil and was designed to paste on the windshield of my car. It was banded in green, stamped with the seal of Lisieux, and printed with the magic words: "Congres Eucharistique National—Lisieux—No. 253."

Its value became apparent to my secretary, Harriet Whitford, and myself soon after we passed through Caen. We found trim agents de police stationed at every crossroad, engaged in diverting traffic: only those cars could go through to Lisieux which bore a coupefil such as ours.

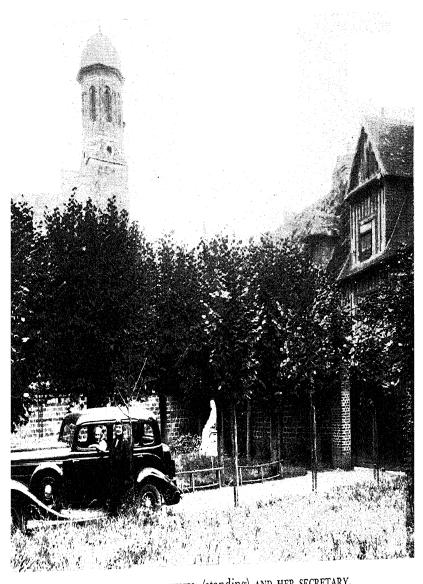
An agent de police saluted and motioned us along; the rue de Caen, leading into Lisieux, began to assume aspects familiar to me. These were the surroundings in which I had spent all of the previous summer, one of the happiest in my life; but now they were embellished as I had never seem them before. All the quaint little Norman houses were garlanded

with flowers; festoons looped the street lamps together; the tricolor and the papal pennants of yellow and white fluttered side by side. As the great gray façade of the Hôtellerie de L'Abbaye loomed up before me, I saw that it was transfigured; every window was draped above and banked below with evergreens studded with pale pink roses. Only the flowers which Saint Therese has made so uniquely her own could serve to decorate the place where she was once the prize pupil.

I got out of the car, and tugged the iron bell pull; the great outer door of the Hôtellerie swung open. The next instant many of my old friends were crowding around me; and "Harriet and the chariot" came rolling into the courtyard, which was once the pupils' playground, and found a peaceful parking place under the same linden trees where the child Therese used to bury her little birds. As far as I know, it was the first time an American car had been parked in a French convent garden.

We were soon unloaded and settled, so we started out again—threading our way slowly through the streets thronged with milling crowds, and decorated, everywhere, with flags and festoons. When we came to the Place Thiers, we saw that the façade of the Cathedral was illuminated, its tall flèche indeed a flaming "arrow" pointing toward Heaven. We circled the Place slowly, then went on towards the Avenue de la Basilique. There we paused, almost blinded with the glory of the sight before us.

Above the hill, the Basilica was all aglow. It was as white as a mansion in Paradise; yet there was a flaming quality about it, too; it seemed to blaze and burn as it towered against the sapphire sky. On the incline leading up to it surged the crowds, so dense that they seemed to form a single moving mass, dark despite the radiance that streamed all around them. In this one scene, the eternal effort of humanity to struggle upward toward the Light, seemed embodied and epitomized. After having gazed upon it, any other sight would have shattered an illusion and dimmed a vision.



FRANCES PARKINSON KEYES (standing) AND HER SECRETARY,
HARRIET WHITFORD, IN THE COURTYARD OF THE
ABBAYE DES BÉNÉDICTINES

When the next evening came, however, it would have been unthinkable not to join the throng inside the Basilica. We found ourselves surrounded by all sorts and conditions of people: Breton women in their quaint caps, Chevaliers of the Legion of Honor, aviators and soldiers, princes and peasants. Boy Scouts stood guard at the entrances, inspected the tickets, directed the disposition of seats. Our places were on the left side of the transept. Turning toward the nave, we could see beyond it a great oval of luminous sky, framed by the stone arch, draped in crimson velvet: turning toward the choir, we could see the pulpit, occupied by Monseigneur d'Herbigny, titular bishop of Ilion, a phalanx of clergy robed in scarlet and purple and black, an altar where the lights ascended in tiers toward the center; and far behind it, the simple statue which has become famous the world over: the figure of a young nun, dressed in the habit of the Carmelite Order, and clasping in her slim hands a cross embowered in roses-Ste. Therese de l'Enfant Jesus.

The arrival of the Papal Legate, Cardinal Pacelli, was scheduled to take place at five in the afternoon on the fourth day of the Congress. We had expected to watch the progress of his cortege from the home of a friend; but when we tried to reach this we found ourselves waved on toward the station instead. Puzzled, but obedient, we proceeded on our way until we reached the Place de la Gare, where a space directly behind the military guard was designated to us by a smiling agent de police. "When the cortege begins to move," he said, "madame will please allow the high officials of Church and State to pass. After that her car will take its place in line."

"But my car does not belong in the procession!" I said, gasping.

"Mais, oui, madame," he said smiling, and disappeared.

There was no further chance to argue with him; it was already evident that a great event was imminent. The splash of scarlet, the patch of purple, near the railroad station,

revealed that the seven Cardinals-headed by Cardinal Dougherty of Philadelphia-the eleven Archbishops and the sixty Bishops who had come to Lisieux for the Congress, were all foregathered; so were the civil authorities, many of them almost equally gorgeous in attire. A military command rang out sharply, and the bayonets held by the soldiers in front of us were raised in salute; an unseen band began to play the Marseillaise. Then a single scarlet-clad figure detached itself from the group at the further end of the square, and an outcry arose, increasing in volume as the Legate moved forward, the folds of his cape sweeping magnificently around him, and came into full view. His manner was gracious, his carriage stately, his presence imposing. From that moment, he dominated every scene of which he formed a part. Never have I beheld a figure of more supreme grace and grandeur; the spontaneity of the tribute accorded him was unsurprising.

After the Legate had encircled the crowd, blessing it as he went, the cortege began to form, and, in due course, my own faithful car swung into its appointed place at the rear. As we rolled along, the crowds began to cheer, "Madame la President! Madame la President!" I bowed and smiled and waved my hand, still dazed by the role assigned to me; then suddenly I guessed the reason for it: my car bore on the hubs of its wheels the name of the premier model of a well-known make, which happened to be "President"; the international license plates, three in number, gave it an added touch of importance; the official coupefil completed the picture. Police and populace alike had apparently leapt to the conclusion that I was the wife of some foreign chief executive. With the best intentions in the world, there was nothing I could do at the moment but carry out a great impersonation to the best of my ability. Later that same evening, when we dined at the home of the attorney general with two bishops in the assembled company, I confessed to my enforced duplicity, and received smiling absolution. But when I reached the Abbaye, Gertrude informed me that an agent de police had been there to inquire whether I was the wife of the President of Venezuela, or of the President of Haiti! With some relief, I found that she had assigned me to Venezuela and the matter rested there!

The Congress achieved its climax in the triumphant Procession of the Blessed Sacrament with which it came to a close. Thousands of laymen, as well as hundreds of clergy, took part in this procession, which paraded gorgeously all the way from the Basilica to the Château d'Ouilly-le-Vicente, several miles distant. The Legate, robed in gold, rode beneath a golden canopy on a float spread with cloth of gold, from which the masses of fresh flowers that decorated it seemed to spring as from some natural source. He sat quietly, his figure relaxed rather than rigid, his eyes fixed on the golden Monstrance elevated before him. When he raised his hand in blessing, the gesture had seemed comprehensive and universal. In his unswerving gaze, everyone within range of vision felt the force of the faith that could be concentrated on this Symbol of Salvation.

It is hazardous to return to a place which has furnished complete contentment and unique inspiration; such a return often results in disillusionment. But this was not my experience that year in Lisieux. The previous summer I had gone there as a stranger and an outsider, with one isolated aim—to write an unpretentious biography of Ste. Therese de l'Enfant Jesus. In returning to it, I found that I had my own established place in a circle of friends, my own recognized center in which to work, and that this work had ramifications and rewards unvisualized twelve months earlier. When the Congress was over, the pilgrims gone, the Abbaye silent again, I was reinstalled in the old refectory looking out on the

courtyard garden, and again I found the peace which passes all understanding and the glory of God seemed constantly to surround me.

After that, without any preconceived plan, it seemed natural to spend part of every summer at the Abbaye and to use it as a center for any sort of writing which was indicated at the time. It has never seemed strange to me that the fiction I wrote there was singularly successful; after all, it was the only place I had ever found where I could be sure of working without complications or distractions. I spent the early days of my widowhood there and also the intervals between some particularly trying assignments in Germany. I no longer hesitated to undertake any kind of a task. I felt sure now that they were all part of a pattern, just as written in heaven had been; and this feeling was strengthened by the fact that it had become evident this could never have been achieved if I had delayed the undertaking.*

Eventually, on the feast day of St. Louis of France, the little chapel of blessed memory was the scene of my own reception into the Church.† I left Lisieux the following morning, headed for Nevers and Lourdes, to write a biography of Bernadette. It was the same day that France began mobilizing for the Second World War.

Perseverance was one of the qualities which I had come to admire most in studying the life of Saint Therese; I was doing my best to follow her "along a little way." In spite of conditions which were first merely uncomfortable, but which grew increasingly critical and then became downright dangerous, I remained in France until the source material for the new book was gathered and the new book itself fully out-

^{*} Madame la Néele, née Jeanne Guérin, Therese Martin's cousin, who was also the widow of her personal physician, died the following year. Madame la Néele's help in documentation had been invaluable. So had the help of various other persons—teachers, fellow-students, etc., who either died later on or moved away from Lisieux. Without their cooperation, the biography could never have taken its present form.

[†] The story of this experience is fully related in the book entitled ALONG A LITTLE WAY.

lined.* Finally I came home, across a sea strewn with submarines, on a French freighter. For a short time thereafter, I continued to have tidings of my friends in France and none of these were alarming. Afterwards, the Occupation brought with it a long, long silence. Then came terrible news.

Lisieux had been attacked by three squadrons of airplanes and almost destroyed. The Lexovians had accepted as inevitable both the bombing by the English the night of June 7th and the bombing by the Americans the following afternoon—it was part of the price they had to pay for liberation. However, it was not inevitable that the German Army of Occupation should go about the next morning, setting fire to buildings which had previously escaped. The result was a holocaust.

Through some miracle Carmel was spared; the wind changed as the fire swept down the street where the convent stands, leaving it unscathed. But the Abbaye des Bénédictines was totally demolished. The Prioress and twenty nuns were killed outright, among them three who had take refuge from another convent. The fate of the others was still unknown.

Gradually, more news filtered through. I learned that besides the nuns who had been killed, several others, badly wounded, had been taken to the Municipal Hospital on stretchers. When this was also hit and ignited, they were removed to neighboring châteaux, which had been transformed into make-shift hospitals. The nuns who were neither killed nor injured had somehow made their way over shell-torn roads to a farm, hidden among clustering hills. There they found shelter in a stable.

Still within hearing of the bursting shells, they resumed recitation of their Office where they had left off the night before. Next they reorganized their conventual life. Their chaplain, whose house had collapsed over him, but who had escaped, celebrated Mass at a portable altar; meanwhile, the

^{*} This book, entitled the sublime shepherdess, was published the following year.

Community knelt in the hay which served them as bedding. The cow stalls were used as both sacristy and confessional. Very soon the singing of vespers was resumed and of the Te Deum at matins on feast days. When some of the hardier nuns forged their way back to the ruins of their Abbaye, they found that the fire had destroyed almost everything they had hidden under their apple trees when they realized that the Invasion was impending. A few breviaries and antiphonaries were left, a few ragged cowls, a little linen stained with phosphorous. They took these pitiful remnants of past plenty to the stable. In one tragic night they had lost not only their Prioress and twenty of their fellow-nuns, but their sai ttly relics, their holy vessels, their artistic treasures and their priceless archives. The Abbaye which owed its terrain to the Conqueror, which had survived for nearly a thousand years, and which had achieved the supreme distinction of nurturing a patron saint of France was reduced to rubble. Notre Dame du Pré had become Notre Dame of Bethlehem.

aliy

The days in the stable were laborious, the nights har The sky was rarely calm. Air raids continued over Lisicand the surrounding countryside. One morning, a lathrown from an airplane that was unloading made a tredous hole close to the stable. The aged chaplain was standing nearby and, though he was not injured, the shock proved so great for his strength to sustain, coming, as it did, after so many others. He suffered a paralytic stroke. The nuns watched over him prayerfully and cared for him as best they could. But they had no medicine to give him. When means were finally found to hospitalize him, he was beyond all help. A few days after his death, word came to his bereft flock that Mère Marie Aimee, the nun most injured during the bombardment, had died also. Even though their worst privations,

materially speaking, were over, the refugees were heavy hearted.

However, more adequate shelter now seemed assured. They left the stable to install themselves in the parish hall of St. Meem at Pre d'Auge—a lovely locality, the same where Madame de Crequi had taken refuge during the Revolution, living herself at the Château des Comtes de la Riviere and from there governing her Community, scattered about the neighborhood in little groups. If she could triumph over her hardships, so could they, her spiritual daughters tried to assure themselves. But within a few hours the Germans had dislodged them from the parish hall and they returned to their stable. Then, as the tide of battle came closer and closer, they refugeed again—this time to Paris.

Soon, after they were established in temporary quarters there, I began to hear from them again, not indirectly and in snatches, but through long letters which they wrote me them-

lves, telling me everything I have set down here and much pesides. They were all homesick for Normandy and eventually, at the help of a small French society entitled Amis de Line & Lime du Pré, they were able to secure title to a prophown as La Monteillerie, only a few kilometers from a deux. Its outbuildings had been severely damaged during hombardment, and its château had suffered through a pus changes of ownership, unavoidable neglect and German occupation. But its hillside location was beautiful, and though it was ill-adapted to cloistral requirements, it had dig fity and distinction. It would serve as an expedient. With rejoicing—and with the aid of American Army trucks!—the Benedictines took up residence at the Monteillerie.

Y1 Shortly thereafter, I went back to them—not, of course, to that portion of the château which served as a makeshift cloister, but to the former library, destined to serve me as a combination bedroom, dining room, reception room and study—and the center in which to work on another book. It

was pretty crowded and it lacked all the luxuries which we, as Americans, take for granted; it also lacked the blessed serenity and seclusion of the Abbaye. But I could see that it would answer its purpose, not only in establishing the contacts I needed to authenticate the new novel, but as a vantage point from which to visit the stricken people, whose past kindnesses had facilitated my first labors in Lisieux, and the places which had meant so much to me. I knew that the Noels had lost everything they had in the world and were living in one room, in devastated Caen; I knew that Monsieur Cailliaux had perished miserably in a concentration camp and that his widow had escaped in her nightgown when their beautiful house on the rue Pont Mortain fell in flames. She had taken refuge at a tiny villa near the sea, formerly used for pleasure excursions. I wanted to get to the Noels and to Madame Cailliaux, to Carmel and elsewhere, as soon as possible. But my first obligation was to the Benedictines.

I had brought with me for distribution as many of the necessities for creature comfort and civilized living as I could crowd into my station wagon. The nuns unpacked the bales and boxes with cries of delight and gratitude at Recreation, the evening after my arrival. Ever since the bombardment, they had been without hot water bottles, without knitting needles, without safety pins—to mention only a few commodities; they had also been without coffee, tea, chocolate and fruit—to mention only a few staples. If I had come laden with the treasures of the Indies, these could hardly have meant more to them. Yet, cold and hungry and comfortless as they had been for so long, their joy reached its culmination when I took a small box from my bag and handed it to the Prioress.

"I have brought back the silver and ebony rosary, the Benedictine crucifix and the medal of St. Benedict, given me on my first birthday with you," I told her. "And the plates with the story of the Sieur de Framboisie are all safe in my china closet at home. I use them for my most important

parties and they are greatly admired. Of course, I always say where they come from."

"So our treasure was not completely destroyed after all!" one of the nuns exclaimed.

My approach to the Monteillerie had been from Le Havre, over the Quilleboeuf ferry and through Pont Audemer; the port was a shell, the Auberge du Vieux Puits badly battered; but the intervening countryside was lush and verdant, the fields full of grazing cattle and the gardens full of blooming flowers. Many fine old half-timbered houses still stood intact. On the whole, the landscape had been reassuring. It was not until I went into Lisieux, late the following afternoon, that I really began to see what had happened in the course of the Liberation and to visualize the full impact of disaster.

Many of the streets were gone entirely, among them the matchless rue de Fevres and the rue Pont Mortain; it was almost impossible to tell where they had been, because of the endless rubble piles. Elsewhere the isolated skeleton of a beautiful building towered over a mass of ruins, or some grotesque remnant of household equipment—a twisted iron bedstead, an overturned tub, a yawning armoire—stood starkly out. The nun who had formerly been the Mère Hôtelière and who was now the Mère Sous-Prieure was with me, but she made no comments as we went along and I could not have talked if I had tried. But after we had crossed the Pont de Caen and were approaching the place where the Abbaye had been, I suddenly cried out.

"Ma mère, the crucifix! The great crucifix in the courtyard of St. Désir! That is still standing!"

It loomed ahead of us, huge, gaunt and black. Beyond it lay the ruins of St. Désir and of Notre Dame du Pré. Behind it, the sun was setting, not through the usual soft haze of a Lexovian evening, but in a flaming sky.

Silently, the nun and I gazed into each other's eyes. No words were needed to say that our thoughts were the same.

We were remembering that morning so long ago—was it really only ten years or was it ten centuries?—when she had calmed me, telling me that everyone had strange and terrible dreams some times and that they were inexplicable. But they had no significance. They were not visions. . . .

I am not trying to explain anything now. I am only telling what happened—and what I know. I know how the sky looked when the Germans fired Lisieux, and how the crucifix must have looked, silhouetted against the flames. And I know that when everything else perished, the crucifix proved indestructible.

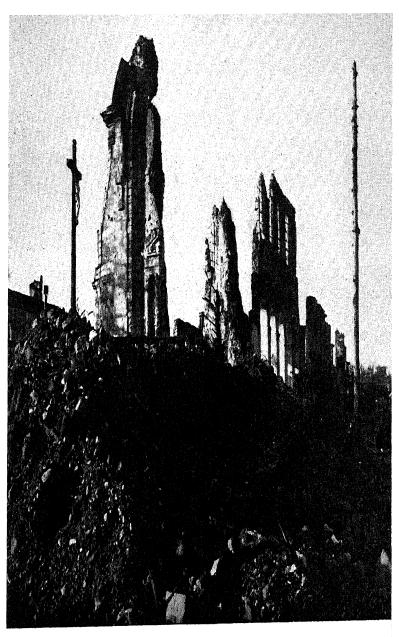
IV

We continued our sad pilgrimage. It was not so hard to talk after seeing the crucifix. The Mère Sous-Prieure told me that many of the former abbesses had been buried in the crypt of St. Désir and that it had been possible to identify and recover some of the tombs.

"There was consolation in this," she said, "especially since the center of our own little cemetery was completely torn up during the bombardment. It became one large pit where we buried the remains of the nuns who perished at that time. You remember our cemetery, madame, do you not? We went there one day together and you gathered flowers among the graves."

I remembered it very well. After the "old" chapel had become the Church of St. Désir, it had, of course, been unavailable for the entombment of the nuns; they had plotted out a little cemetery on a green slope of their own land. It was a remote and tranquil spot, far back of the convent quadrangle—but less distant from the railroad track which the liberators had, inevitably, sought to destroy. And so it had become a "great pit." . . .

We ceased to speak of the cemetery and wandered on through the ruins, recalling the memories these evoked. The



THE CRUCIFIX LEFT STANDING IN THE COURTYARD OF ST. DÉSIR

form of the ancient Abbaye was still partially discernible; but the Sous-Prieure told me that even that would soon be a thing of the past. The tottering walls were a menace to public safety; they would have to be leveled. Then, even the last traces of the thousand-year Abbaye would be gone.

"But perhaps another could rise here."

"How? We are ruined. Where would the money come from? Who would help us?"

I could give no definite answer to these questions or to the similar ones put to me by others. I could only say that, if Madame de Crequi had found a way, after the French Revolution . . .

"But the buildings were not in ruins then. She regained all but one."

"It took her twenty years to do it. Thirty before everything was restored to its former order and the Community together again. It is only a short time since the bombardment. Perhaps within twenty years—or thirty—"

I tried to speak with conviction. As a matter of fact, I did not feel entirely hopeless. But my hopes were without form and substance until I talked with Mère Martina and Claire, the two nuns who had been with Mère Marie Aimee when she died.

It is not the practice of the Benedictine Order to encourage, or even to allow purposeless conversation. But, with the permission of the Prioress, conferences may be held at given times on any subject which, in her opinion, really has significance. The Community was taking an active interest in the novel I was writing that summer,* as it had in everything I had written at the Abbaye. I needed some information in connection with it which these two nuns could supply, and the Prioress gave them permission to talk with me freely, not only about the matter I had in mind, but about any others which might have a bearing on it.

Like Mère Marie Aimee, they had been injured during the

^{*} CAME A CAVALIER

bombardment, but their injuries had yielded to treatment, whereas those of Mère Marie Aimee had not. Three operations had been unsuccessfully performed, in an effort to remove the bomb fragments with which she had been struck. But, as she lay dying, she did not talk about the destruction of the Abbaye, according to Mère Claire and Mère Martina. She talked about its restoration.

"Its restoration! Why, it is completely ruined!"

"Yes, but she had so much faith that she believed it could be rebuilt. She even drew a little sketch, with a detailed plan for such reconstruction."

They showed it to me. It was a very practical plan. But then, Mère Marie Aimee had always been practical. She was one of the most prudent and economical cellarers the Abbaye ever had and, as Mistress of Novices, she accomplished wonders. However, this was not wholly because of her sound sense. It was largely because she had so much faith.

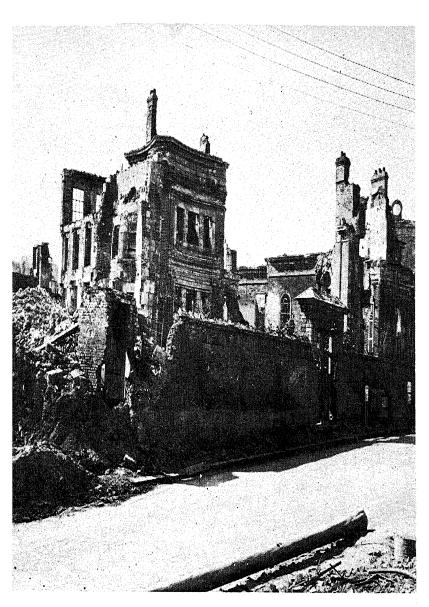
"She made us promise to keep this sketch," Mère Claire and Mère Martina told me. "She asked us to pray every night that the plan might become a reality. She bound us by oath to do everything in our power to see that the land given us by William the Conqueror should not fall into impious hands, and that the buildings beatified by the presence of Saint Therese should be restored to her grace and her glory."

"Yes, but how?" I asked, as some had asked me.

"We thought you might help. In fact, we are counting on you. But others would help too."

"I am afraid I could not do much. At the moment I do not see ... what others?" I asked. But I already knew what they meant—that there is always Saint Therese herself, that there is always her "Little Way."

It is with this knowledge and the hope it gives me that I have written a new Prologue to my story which has also undergone indicated revision. The original Prologue was a letter to Eleanor Carroll, who instigated the biography. It was



ABBAYE DES BÉNÉDICTINES AFTER THE BOMBING AND FIRE

written in the refectory which is destroyed, looking out on the flowering courtyard which has been laid waste; it no longer presented a true picture, for it described, as if it were actually there, a scene which has ceased to exist. The original dedication too has lost much of its meaning. The Prioress to whom it was inscribed was killed in the bombardment and so were twenty members of that Community "in whose midst I dwelt while I strove to fulfill the task that was entrusted to me with such universal and touching confidence." I can offer the book in its new form only to their memory.

Only? It is a great and glorious memory! And time has not dimmed it, any more than it has dimmed the memory of the first day that I went knocking at their door and entered the courtyard that led to a "garden land."* I still seem to see them all very clearly, just as I saw them in the flesh when I dwelt among them. But I seem to see Mère Marie Aimee most clearly of all. And I do pray every night that her plan may become a reality and her faith be fulfilled; that the land given by the Conqueror shall not fall into impious hands and that the buildings beatified by a Saint shall not vanish from among the sanctuaries of the earth.

FRANCES PARKINSON KEYES

^{*}The literal translation of Carmel in the Bible is "park" or "garden land." Figuratively, it has a still more significant meaning.





THERESE MARTIN AT THE AGE OF THREE



IN MAY, all Normandy is a miracle of florescence. The undulant roads that traverse the Valley d'Eure and the Valley d'Auge are bordered on either side with orchards, white with blossoms which a poet has called "The fragrant snow of spring." The "plains of Caen" are covered with lush green studded with flowers. The white beaches of Trouville and Deauville, sweeping back from the sea, merge swiftly with the verdant countryside. And all this is only the beginning of beauty. Flowering thorn, richly red as well as delicately pale, rises in soft profusion above the stone walls which flank the streets of sleepy villages. Chestnut trees bright with buds of cream and rose crowded close together to form candlelike clusters, dapple the sunny squares with their soft shade. Hillsides glow with the same yellow gorse from which centuries ago a bold-faced boy plucked a plant-à-genêt to stick in his cap and gave the name Plantagenet to the royal line which he founded. Early roses, small and sturdy, golden-hearted and pink-petaled, clamber over the trellised arbors leading to great houses. Lilacs and syringa, their leaves and their scent intermingling, perfume the quiet gardens of the poor. Wild violets nestle beside small and secret streams.

To those who have lingered among these lovely landscapes, it seems natural that the young saint of our own times who was so essentially the child of this region should be tenderly called the "Little Flower" in every corner of the globe to which her name and fame have penetrated. It seems natural also that the austerity of the statues which represent her, fair and guileless, in the simple habit of the Carmelite Order. should be softened not only by the sweetness of her smile but also by the luxuriance of the roses which she clasps in her slender hands; and it ceases to be surprising that these statues are always banked with bloom, even in the coldest and most barren places. Her own feeling for flowers and the conviction of their close relation to her life and calling is exquisitely revealed in the record which she wrote herself, and which has so appropriately been called l'Histoire d'une Ame (1)-the story of a soul. Her followers have been swift to sense the significance of this feeling. To some the simile of the hidden violet is most appealing in connection with her; to others the fragrant rose; and to still others the shining lily. All are appropriate in their symbolism. All have their proper place in the veneration in which she is held throughout the world.

Yet there is another side of the background of Therese Martin's story, a side no less significant than that to which the blooming countryside leads us so logically, but far more often overlooked. Normandy is not only a region of florescence; it is a region of productiveness. The orchards which in the springtime are bright with blossoms, in the autumn are laden with fruit-fruit which is sound and excellent when it is in its natural state and also when it is transformed into rich conserves and spicy cider and the concentrated essence of "Calvados," a powerful ardent liquor, medicinally invaluable. The lush pastures are never empty. Herds of strong cattle, flocks of sturdy sheep, graze over them; an abundance of milk and meat nourishes paysan and seigneur alike. Along the highways bordered by flowering thorn, the great Percheron horses plod patiently, no load seemingly so heavy that it can defeat their endurance. The flower gardens, scented by lilac and syringa, lie close beside the tiny patches of artichokes and neat rows of potatoes, carefully tended. The land is as full of

plenty as it is of beauty. But it is not the plenty so prodigally scattered about in the tropics. It is the plenty wrung from the unwilling soil by the perserverance and pluck of human beings; the plenty that cannot be ravished by harsh winters or high winds or incessant rains, because men and women, with God's help, have remained undefeated by these elements and have nurtured their land in spite of them; a plenty into which have gone for centuries unswerving thrift and endless toil, unsparing self-sacrifice and cruel anguish. Your true Norman is no sybarite, no idler, no dreamer, for whom life has been rendered lazy and luxuriant, either by force of circumstance or by national inertia. Hardihood is his heritage; energy his armor; intelligence his shield; strength his salvation. He safeguards his own birthright through his own efforts. He is a Spartan, a toiler, a conqueror. He can prevail in spite of a hard and barren way. Even his faith is the faith of fortitude. He exemplifies the words of Saint Paul: "To him that overcometh, the crown of life shall be given."

If this had not been so, if the quality of Norman strength had not gone into forming the character of Therese Martin as well as the quality of Norman sweetness, her story might have lacked some essential element for universal appeal. As it is, there is no such element lacking—or so it seemed to me, after I had been a sojourner for months in the land where she lived so short a time ago, meeting those who knew her in the flesh, visiting the scenes which she sanctified. And this is the story, at least as I have learned it:

New Year's Day is always a great festival in France. But in the year of grace 1873 it was celebrated very quietly in the pleasant little house on the rue de Saint-Blaise which was the home of a well-known watchmaker of Alençon named Louis-Joseph Martin. His two elder daughters, Marie and Pauline, who went to boarding school at Le Mans, were home for the holidays. Under normal conditions, he would have spared no efforts to make the feast day especially delightful for them and their two younger sisters, Leonie and

Celine. He was devoted to his children, and their happiness. like their welfare, was always in his thoughts. But his heart turned even more tenderly to Zelie, his wife, who was not well-Zelie, with whom he had fallen in love at first sight. as he passed her one evening at dusk on the bridge of Saint-Léonard. Zelie, whose soft hair was parted so smoothly away from her calm brow and whose eyes were so clear and candid. Zelie, whose affection for him had been as spontaneous and steady as his for her. Zelie, the mother of his children, who had welcomed abundant maternity with such a brave spirit. Zelie, whose mind was as meticulous, whose habits as sedulous, and whose fingers as dextrous, as his own: for she was a designer of those fairylike laces to which Alençon owes much of its fame. Indeed, she was the instigator of a revival of its most exquisite art, and into the lacemaking planned in her parlor went the same skill and the same patience and the same delicacy of workmanship that characterized the mending and manufacture of clocks and watches in his little shop on the rue du Pont Neuf.

The similarity of their occupations and the manner in which they pursued these had from the first created and cemented a common bond between them and made their mutual communion the closer-they were all in all to each other; and therefore, it was natural that on New Year's Day the mind of Louis-Joseph should be preoccupied with thoughts of Zelie. For she was expecting another child, a child on whom they were pinning the highest hopes. Both in early youth had themselves hoped to become members of religious orders, and both had been thwarted in this desire; and though later they had found compensations for their disappointment in the sacrament of marriage, they had never ceased to long for a son who should fulfill the destiny they had missed. They visualized him as a missionary; they dwelt on the dream of a man-child who in time should go to the far corners of the earth to reveal the true faith and bring to the heathen a way of salvation. Two sons-Louis and Jeanhad already been born to them, but these little boys, as well as two little girls—Helene and Melanie—had died at a tender age. Now at last was a prospect that there might be another. But both Louis-Joseph and Zelie knew in their hearts that the hope which was so high also had in it a quality of desperation. Their marriage had been one of maturity, not of youth: she was now forty-two and he fifty. If a son were not born to them at this festival season, they could not again look confidently forward toward a future feast day which might be crowned with such a blessing.

New Year's Day came and went uneventfully. But on the second of January that sense of thrilled expectation which presages the greatest of all human events on the family scene began to pervade the pleasant little house on the rue de Saint-Blaise. Zelie no longer sat at the window of her small parlor glancing from time to time toward the royal court-yard and splendid palace across the street, as she looked up from the squares of Point d'Alençon she was assembling and the delicate designs she was tracing on fine paper. For the time being, she could no longer receive the elegant ladies who came to her with commissions for fashioning their finery or the skilled lacemakers who carried home with them the handiwork she intrusted to them. Her hour was upon her.

She had gone upstairs to her own room, back of the one where her little daughters slept. It was a room of taste and distinction, the massiveness of its dark polished furniture softened by the richness of its rose draperies. Its order was complete, for even in time of travail Zelie was scrupulous in her supervision of detail; and she was as composed and confident in childbed as she was in church. She had prepared to meet her ordeal with the same quiet courage which she had repeatedly revealed before. But there was a new element in her endurance now. If a savior of lost souls, a saint among sinners, were born to her, this would be the supreme moment of her life. She was ready to meet it supremely.

When evening fell, the curtains were drawn against cold

as well as darkness. Snow had begun to fall; the silent city was blanketed with it; and the little house on the rue de Saint-Blaise became more and more hushed, more and more portentous of atmosphere. Marie and Pauline, though they had gone to bed, could not sleep. They knew that their mother, whom they adored, was suffering; they felt, without fully understanding it, the deep significance of the hour. They lay still and listened; and as they did so, they heard a clock striking midnight, sonorous through the stillness. Then they were startled by a soft sound of tapping. It was their father knocking at their door. They leaped up to meet him, remembering, even in their excitement, to open the door for him noiselessly. After that they waited, breathlessly, for him to speak to them. He told them that they had a little sister.

He was a man who had met all the disappointments of his life with tranquil fortitude. At the age of twenty, he had traveled, largely on foot, to the famous monastery of Great St. Bernard in the Alps and had asked to be received there, not as a wayfarer, but as a postulant. He had been turned away because of the inadequacy in his classical education-for like most orders, the one to which he sought admittance set a high standard of scholarship. On his return to Normandy, his father, a captain in the French army, had consented to a continuance in his studies, but he had been thwarted again, this time by illness. It was then that, without a mumur, he had taken up the trade for which he had been trained, opening the little shop on the rue du Pont Neuf and adding a simple stock of jewelry to his clocks and watches. When four of his children had died, he had had the strength to meet each fresh bereavement in the same spirit as his wife, and we know, from the words she wrote herself, what the fine form of this spirit was. "When I closed the eyes and shrouded the forms of my children, I grieved greatly, it is true; but the sorrow I experienced was one of resignation." And now that instead of the long-awaited, the long-prayed-for son another daughter had been born to him, he never gave tongue to the feeling of frustration which must, momentarily at least, have been overwhelming. Eventually, he had his reward. His last-born became also his best-beloved. But at the moment of her birth he could hardly have visualized what manner of child she was.

On the fourth of January, the new baby was baptized in one of the small side chapels of Notre-Dame d'Alençon. Normandy is rich in splendid structures. Indeed, it was at Caen, not far from Alençon, that the Gothic ideal first found expression in architecture at the Abbaye aux Hommes and the Abbaye aux Dames; and there is hardly a Norman village, much less a Norman city, in which the model originating there has not been faithfully followed and nobly developed. Notre-Dame d'Alençon is one of the fairest flowers of this development. The triple arches which form its entrance have the delicacy of purest point; its crowned columns inclose an interior of infinite graciousness. The benignant figure of the crucified Christ bends down from a great cross pendent over the transept, and through the perpetual twilight which pervades the nave, and which has a tender quality like that of the gloaming over a lovely landscape, radiance seems to flow in long rays from a golden monstrance. The altar is, literally, a center of light.

Into this sanctuary where gloom and splendor have so mystically been merged, the baby was brought with tender care. No scene could have been more supremely suited to the baptism of "a child of grace and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven"; and she had been clothed in a manner befitting its beauty. Zelie Martin's genius for design and delicacy of handiwork are revealed in every one of the little garments which she prepared. The sheerest lawn, the finest laces, the most exquisite embroideries had gone into their making; they fell in a snowy cascade beside the graceful basin as the baby's nurse held her over the font of gray, rose-veined marble. (2) Paul Albert Boul, the son of an intimate friend, who had come to Alençon on purpose for the occasion, was her godfather; her eldest sister, Marie, was her godmother;

the three younger sisters clustered around their father, clinging to him excitedly as they watched the progress of the ceremony and heard the baby given the name of Marie-Françoise-Thérèse. It was a great occasion for them; they were, after all, celebrating the festival of the New Year, celebrating it more wonderfully than they had ever done before.

Marie was already thirteen years of age at the time, Pauline eleven. Leonie six, and Celine four. Consequently, they were old enough to take that conscious and continuous pleasure in Therese which every girl who has had a small sister always remembers as one of the most delightful sensations of her life. The experience is universal, both in simplicity and in significance. They all went about the house on tiptoe when she was asleep and spoke to each other in guarded whispers. They learned to play quiet games; and when she woke, they rushed to the side of her cradle, hugging and kissing her, calling out to their father that they were sure they had seen her smile, summoning their mother to come to look at the color of the baby's eyes. For a little while their happiness in her was unclouded. Then their beautiful baby sister stopped smiling and lay limp and languid, her blue eyes closed, and they were stricken.

Their mother had been unable to nurse her; and in the seventies artificial feeding of babies was still in so experimental a state that it was nearly always disastrous. A wet nurse was indispensable under such circumstances, and a wet nurse who was decent and trustworthy, as well as clean and vigorous, was almost impossible to find. Babies died by the hundreds, even in well-to-do families, from sheer starvation; Zelie Martin herself must have seen many wilt away from this cause alone, who today would easily be saved. But she had no intention of permitting this to happen to her baby; as soon as she was conscious of the character of the crisis, she set out on foot at break of dawn for Semallé, a village a few miles from Alençon. She knew of a woman there, a peasant named Rose Taille, who might be able to

save her child for her; she did not lose a moment in seeking her out. On the way, at a deserted point in her path, she met two lurking vagabonds. She brushed by them so unseeingly that they were too startled to molest her, and she rushed along unharmed.

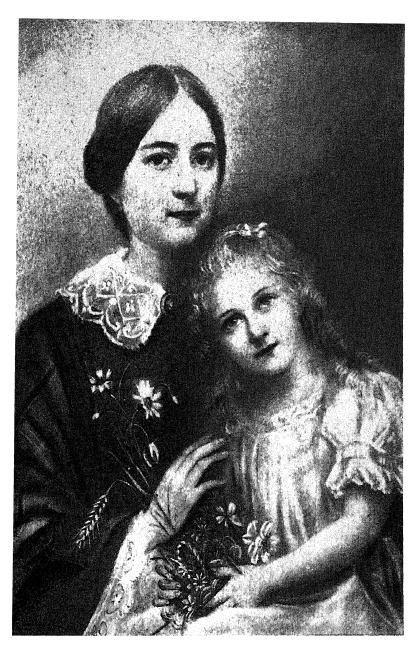
Some instinct probably warned her that she must present her plea dramatically if she were to do so successfully. For Zelie Martin was not a woman given to heroics; she was as retiring as she was resolute, and, of course, she had at her disposal the means of sending someone to do her errand for her or of going by carriage, at a conventional hour, herself. But her sudden appearance at the small thatched cottage in Semallé where La Petite Rose, her stolid husband Moise, and their four children dwelt, had the desired effect. It startled Moise to the point of overriding his objections to a foster daughter, and it moved Rose to immediate sympathy for the baby who was so desperately ill. She agreed to return to Alencon at once with Madame Martin; and though after she had started, Moise-recovering from the spell which Zelie had laid upon him-had a change of heart and sent one of their small sons after Rose to fetch her home, her mission unfulfilled, she dispatched him in short order back to his father and herself went on her way.

The baby was apparently moribund when they reached the little house on the rue de Saint-Blaise. Rose gathered it into her strong arms and laid it against her full breast. But reassuring as her gesture was, the expression of her kindly face betrayed her. It was evident that she believed she had been summoned too late. Zelie, her strong spirit broken at last, fled to her own room and flung herself on her knees. She could not watch and wait for the death of another child: the resignation she had shown when she lost the others had been tried to the utmost limits—the petition she sobbed out was wordless. But even in this desperate hour, prayer was her natural refuge, and gradually she regained her self-control; slowly the faith that Therese would not be taken from

her began to well up in her heart again. She rose and walked firmly back to the other room.

The baby had been able to drink a little. That, in itself, was something. But now she lay in the peasant woman's ample lap, as white, as motionless, as some tiny figure sculptured in marble. Zelie, believing that she had already died, tried to give thanks that death had laid so gentle a hand on her. Then suddenly Therese opened her eyes and smiled!

There could be no further question of separating her from Rose; and since Rose could not leave Moise and her own children, there was nothing to do but to send Therese to the little thatched cottage in Semallé. Until she was weaned, she was never again out of her foster mother's sight. The existence of Rose, like that of most French peasants, was made up of heavy drudgery and endless toil, but she accepted her lot in life with the placid patience characteristic of her kind, and she showed remarkable resourcefulness in the care of her small charge. When she went out into the fields to work, she took Therese with her in a wheelbarrow, making a nest of hay for the baby in the bottom of this; while she was doing her milking, she knotted the baby securely in her wide apron, which served as a hammock; and when she required complete freedom of all her limbs for her labors, she fastened the baby ingeniously to the cow itself. This family cow, whose name was La Rousse-Russet Lady-was a very important member of the peasant household. She was the only cow which Moise and Rose possessed, and they cherished her with that fostering affection which the French habitually lavish on animals. There is probably no race in the world which is kinder to these or which makes them a more integral part of their daily life, and while fastening Therese securely on the ample back of Russet Lady, Rose probably addressed them both in terms equally endearing. At all events, the importance of the rôle which Russet Lady played on the scene at this stage has not been overlooked by historians. "She was a superb beast, and very large, much larger than her



THERESE MARTIN AT THE AGE OF FOUR WITH HER MOTHER

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mistress," Carbonel says in his delightful life of Ste. Thérèse de Lisieux. (3) "She was called La Rousse because her white hide was spotted with russet color; and one of these spots, at the end of her right ear, gave her a very coquettish look when she stood upright, which she always did when little Therese was on her back. Then, very proudly, she walked majestically forward, lowing as she came. One might almost go so far as to say that the blessed baby brought good fortune to the animal; for while a pestilence smote the cattle in the vicinity, emptying the stables and ruining the villagers, Therese's mount kept her beautiful spotted skin intact, to the great joy of all the Taille family!"

Personally, I am strongly in favor of accepting this charming fantasy as factual. Even the most skeptical or unimaginative mind could not fail to be impressed with the progress which little Therese herself was making as she rode on Russet Lady's back and slept on the fragrant hay piled up on the wheelbarrow. She had rapidly outgrown her fragility. By the time she was ten months old, she could stand alone. When her first birthday rolled around, she was walking; and before she went back to her parents' home, at the age of fifteen months, she was talking, too. Her pleasant little face was framed with fair curls and wreathed in bright smiles. Nothing could be more misleading than to picture her as a sad or sickly child or to present her precocity as prim. She was so fleet of foot that it was almost impossible to keep up with her, so merry that her laughter echoed continually through the house and garden. She loved to leap into her little swing, to go soaring up into the air, higher and higher and higher. She loved to ride a cockhorse on her father's outstretched boot, to tag after him when he went fishing. She loved birds and their nests, flowers and their perfume, brooks and their music, trees and their shade.

All the family letters written at this period reveal her as a delightful little girl. "My little Therese is gentle and darling as a cherub, she will have a charming character, we see

that already, her smile is so sweet."—"My little Therese is becoming more and more adorable, she prattles from morning to night and says her prayers like an angel."—"Therese is a little fairy, the joy of all the family, and she is remarkably intelligent, too!"

Zelie Martin's pen glided rapturously over the paper as she wrote to her brother, Isidore Guérin, who lived in Lisieux, and to her elder daughters, who were still at school in Le Mans and who frankly confessed that they would rather hear about their little sister than have any other news which their mother could send them. It was a joyous period for the entire Martin family. Marie had been gravely ill with typhoid fever when Therese was a baby, and the aftermath of this illness had been long and tedious. But she had finally made a good recovery, and the little girls were now all well and happy, devotedly attached to one another and to their parents. There was a strong family resemblance among them, both mentally and physically. All were gifted, and all were extremely pretty, though the dark rich coloring of Marie, Pauline, and Celine was strikingly different from that of their sisters, Leonie and Therese, who were blue-eyed and golden-haired. Marie, the eldest, had been nicknamed "Diamond" by her father because she was so brilliant and so strong; and carrying the fantasy inspired by his trade still further, he nicknamed Pauline "Lovely Pearl." The qualities of steadfastness and reliability, of energy and will power, which were to prove so pronounced in after years, were already beginning to be felt in these elder sisters; so were Celine's qualities of buoyancy and wit. Leonie, Celine, and Therese, like Marie and Pauline, had been given nicknames by their father, though he had gone beyond the realm of precious stones in choosing theirs. Leonie was the "Brave Lady," Celine was the "Valiant Lady," and Therese was the "Little Queen," enthroned by common consent in the family circle long years before she became enthroned in the hearts of faithful followers all over the world.

From their earliest infancy, the little sisters had been nurtured in Christian faith and practice; it was as integral a part of their lives as the bread they ate and the clothes they wore. The latter part of the nineteenth century was a period marked by the meticulous observance of the rites of religion not only in church but also at home and not only in provincial France but also in practically every part of the Christian world. The cherished children of God-fearing parents in the seventies and eighties were everywhere accustomed to family prayers, to grace before meat, to Biblical textbooks and lexicons of saints, as well as to long and numerous services. They were taught to consult their consciences, to count small sins and small sacrifices. In some circles there was perhaps a tendency to make these observances tedious and tiring or conducive to introspection and sentimentality, but far more often children took pleasure in their prayers, rejoiced in the protection of guardian angels, and were radiantly confident of a Christ Child in their midst. It was through such media as these that religion was revealed to Therese Martin. Jesus was always to her the "living bright reality" which so many of lesser vision have begged that He might become, and all the little sisters were happy in their faith, as they were in every phase of their home life. It never seemed to them a dour thing of darkness. It was always luminous and lovely.

The practices of religion, predominant as these were, in no way interfered with a pattern of living which was gracious in all its phases. The house on the rue de Saint-Blaise, though small, had an arrangement conducive to the amenities of hospitality. The parlor and dining room could easily be thrown into one, and on fête days a well-laden table extended down the entire length of this cleared space. The family fortunes, modest at first, had mounted. Indeed, Zelie's revival of lacemaking had proven so profitable that Louis-Joseph gave more and more of his time toward helping her with the direction of this now thriving industry and eventually gave up his small jewelry shop altogether. With a suitable income

assured for his wife and children, he also felt justified in permitting himself more time for his favorite pursuit, which was fishing. He bought a small secluded plot of land beside the Sarthe River, where a graceful pavilion, hidden from the road by a high wall, was sequestered in a pretty garden. To reach this bit of property, it was necessary to go along the rue du Pont Neuf and turn at the church of Montfort down a succession of narrow winding streets, but it was worth the walk. Louis-Joseph kept his fishing tackle in the pavilion and also installed a small desk in it; he could write there without interruption or annoyance, and when evening fell, he could go out to gaze at the sunset and commune with his own soul. He had great awareness of the beauties of nature, an extreme sensitivity toward them. At the pavilion, no unquiet element disturbed his enjoyment of them.

The whole tenure of family existence was peaceful and pleasant; it seemed destined to flow along indefinitely in the same quiet channels. Only Zelie knew how gravely it was threatened. For years she had concealed a corroding cancer. She had both the fortitude and the reticence of her generation regarding bodily pain, and her condition was already desperate when it was disclosed. The inevitable end was one of extreme anguish.

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The blow of Zelie Martin's death was a terrific one for the entire family. But heavily as it fell on the elder daughters and the bereft widower—who was not only bowed with grief but also bewildered with the prospect of bringing up five motherless little girls—its effect upon Therese was perhaps most disastrous of all.

She was under five years old, and she was passionately attached to her mother. She could not bear to be separated from her when she played in the garden. She went with her as often as she could, when Zelie slipped away quietly to church. She could not even climb up the stairs without pausing at each tread to call out to her, and not until she heard the reassuring response to her cry of "Mamma! Mamma!" would she go another step. Now suddenly there was no answer to her call: her mother lay white and silent; Therese herself was lifted up to kiss a cold forehead.

She had all the extreme sensitivity of a child whose mental and spiritual development has been precocious. The rites with which her mother's deathbed had been surrounded, the sight of her mother's coffin in the corridor—these made a profound impression upon her clear and plastic mind. Something vital, something joyous, went out of her then, never to be recaptured until the "Christmas Grace" which descended upon her ten years later and which she herself has so touch-

ingly described. She had been delightfully gay; she became preternaturally grave. She had been essentially friendly; she became instinctively shy. She had shown occasional healthful flashes of independence and vanity; she became extraordinarily subdued. She had always smiled spontaneously; she began to cry constantly. "The little fairy, the joy of the entire family" had been transfigured into a child whose celestial qualities were haloed by darkness instead of light.

The carping of critics and the solemnity of scholars over this side of Therese Martin's character-or rather over this phase of her development-are actually annoying to the average woman, because nothing could be easier for her to understand-particularly for the woman of advancing years who can herself remember the ravaging results of the deathbed farewells, funeral pomps, and unalleviated mourning with which her own youth was darkened. A general departure from these morbid customs was among the many wholesome changes which came about at the turn of the century, and since then, children especially have been increasingly shielded from the more gruesome aspects of death, while its beautiful and significant attributes have been tenderly revealed to them. But before this change came about, the ghastliness of a family funeral was unassuaged. In many cases, grief itself became engulfed in horror.

This, indubitably, is what happened to Therese. She had lost her mother, which in itself was a shattering experience to a small and sensitive child, and she had lost her under circumstances and amidst scenes which were inexplicably dreadful to her. The consequences were serious, and it took her a long time to recover from them. But there is nothing extraordinary, nothing unnatural, about this. On the contrary, it would have been far more abnormal if, instead of becoming temporarily subdued and shy, she had become rollicking and boisterous! Her smiles, to be sure, were submerged in sadness for the time being, but the essential sweet-

ness, the essential strength, of her character was never even obscured.

Part of the honor for this is due to the great qualities which lay within herself, dominant even through their period of dormancy, but part of it is also due to her father. Even in his most desperate hours, Louis-Joseph Martin had been able to concentrate his consciousness on the plight of his young daughters, rather than on his own stricken state. He recognized their needs, especially the necessity of his last-born and best-beloved. There was no one in Alençon who could help him give Therese the fostering care which she needed, but in Lisieux there was his brother-in-law, Isidore Guérin, a prosperous pharmacist, who had two little girls of his own and whose wife, Celine, was a woman of quick sympathies and quiet understanding; both Isidore and Celine urged Louis to bring Zelie's motherless children to Lisieux and install them close to the Guérins' hospitable hearthstone.

He did not hesitate to make the move. Zelie had died in late summer; by autumn he had already established his family in Lisieux. But it must have meant a wrench for him to leave Alençon. He had spent the happiest years of his life in the little house on the rue de Saint-Blaise, and the secluded pavilion had been the chosen scene of his tranquil hours of study and recreation. Moreover, he was already elderly, both of aspect and of bearing: his hair was snow-white; his manner of dress formal. He was, as a matter of fact, only fifty-five years of age, but he seemed much older. The natural reticence of his character and austerity of his habits had been intensified by his bereavement; he could not hope to make new friends easily in a strange city nor could he resume, with any degree of skill, a trade he had long since given up in order to devote himself more assiduously to the interests of his wife. Besides, he had no incentive for opening a new shop and applying himself again to watchmaking; his income was more than sufficient not only to supply his simple needs

and minister to his cultured taste but also to assure his daughters a suitable education and adequate dowries. Only two preoccupations remained for him: the upbringing of his children and the observance of his religion.

He devoted himself assiduously to both. The house in which the Guérins lived was in the center of the city on the picturesque Place Saint-Pierre, which is dominated by the fine Gothic cathedral-flanked in turn by the bishop's palace-and surrounded by old Norman buildings; it was here that Louis-Joseph first brought his motherless daughters, helping them, one by one, out of the lumbering fiacre in which they had rattled across the cobblestones from the station and seeing them settled around the supper table where Celine and Therese were soon nodding themselves to sleep. But the next day, preparations were already afoot for moving them to a home of their own. With Isidore Guérin's help, Louis-Joseph had found, near the edge of the town, a charming house set in the midst of wide lawns, encircled with trees and shrubbery which separated it attractively from its environs. Without being large or pretentious, its whole effect was that of a country estate, rather than of a suburban residence, and its name, Les Buissonnets-Little Thickets-was agreeably descriptive of its pleasing character. It seemed to Louis-Joseph ideally suited to his purposes. There would be room in the grounds for the children to range freely; the large belvedere would, to a certain extent, replace the pavilion for him; the secluded atmosphere would be beneficial for them all. Without delay, he took possession of the place which has since become world famous as the childhood habitation of a saint.

The taste and feeling with which he equipped and furnished it are evident to this day, for all has carefully been kept intact. The lawns are still smooth and sloping. The great trees, growing in rich variety, still shut away the sights and sounds of the city. The "little thickets" still flourish abundantly, and roses still bloom luxuriantly in the circular

flower beds. Even the vine-covered arbor concealing the pump house remains unchanged. Visitors may wander freely about the grounds where the Martin children played and walk at will through the rooms where they lived, moved, breathed, and had their being. The hearthstone where they trustfully placed their shoes for the Christ Child to fill is just inside the front door. At the right of the entrance is the pleasant dining room which also served as a sitting room, its beautiful Norman armoire filled with fine china and glass, its tables and chairs adorned with the intricate designs which for centuries have brought well-won renown to the woodcarvers of Lisieux. Upstairs, Louis-Joseph's bedroom has been left unchanged. The woodwork is painted pearlgray, and the furniture is mahogany. The round center table is surfaced with marble, the bureau also marble-topped. An Empire bed with a covering of old-gold brocade and a chintz canopy, flowered in shades of cream and blue and lined with old gold to match the coverlet, stands sideways against the wall to which the canopy is attached, and over the lace curtains at the windows are draperies of the same chintz that flows over the bed. There is a gold-framed mirror above the marble mantelpiece and on the mantelshelf a clock, vases, and candlesticks of harmonizing bronze. The oil paintings on the walls are all religious in character, and the old-fashioned oil lamps of hand-painted china with glass globes lend a period touch.

Like all the other relics that we have of him, this room reveals the refinement and restraint which characterized everything upon which Louis-Joseph Martin impressed his personality. It makes us doubly regretful that only the dining room and this chamber have been left entirely unchanged at Les Buissonnets. (4) But we may still see, in an alcove with rose-brocade walls, Therese's Empire bed, spread with a coverlet of pale-pink moiré and surmounted by a canopy, also made of pink moiré. Her toys are grouped around it: a doll's bed, complete with a canopy like Therese's own; a

doll's piano with a well-worn keyboard; a baby doll exquisitely dressed; a little stove and a little tea set; a jump-rope and a workbasket. Her school portfolio is here, too, an old geography, an easel, a small portable desk with a sloping top which opens and shuts, and in a glass case her earrings and brooches, a gold cross on a long gold chain, a little butterfly of silver filigree, and the watch which her father gave her when she made her First Holy Communion.

It is easy to recreate, through these treasures, the back-ground of a dearly beloved and tenderly cherished child. The place in which she slept had all the attributes which make a little girl's room dainty and delightful: the trinkets she wore were tasteful and appropriate, the toys with which she played were the best that could be bought; and every intimate record of the period confirms the consciousness of the deep devotion shown by the entire family to the "Little Queen."

One day, when she and Celine were playing with their dolls, Leonie, who was beginning to feel too much grown up for this pastime, presented them with hers, which was lying on "a basket filled with dresses, with pretty scraps of silk, and other fripperies." She invited her little sisters to choose between these, and Celine, having looked them over, took a handful of silk. After a moment's reflection, Therese in turn held out her hand, saying, "I choose everything!" and carried away the basket and the doll without further ceremony. There was no sense of selfishness in her action; it merely reflected her expectancy of the liberality which was showered on her from every side.

Marie, who had sturdily shouldered family responsibility, became the housekeeper at Les Buissonnets and Pauline her youngest sister's teacher. Therese had already learned her letters at her mother's knee; now she began to read and write in earnest under the "Lovely Pearl's" direction. Her progress was rapid, and always, when the day's stint was over, she went rushing up to the belvedere to show her father her tidy sums and exercises. When he had admired and praised these, they

started out for a walk together, their small white spaniel Tom trotting along beside them as they wandered through the town and lingered in the public garden and waiting patiently outside the door when they went into the cathedral for a brief period of daily devotion. Later on, when her father had gone back to his study, and she had begun to play in the garden, Therese peeled off the young bark from the trees and, copying Pauline, made a tisane (5) for him by steeping it in water and carrying it proudly to him in the prettiest cup she could find; he always pretended to drink it down to the last drop, as if it had been the most delicious of concoctions. In the evening, the family gathered around the center table in the living room, where a large lamp spread its cheerful rays over the little group and where a checkerboard had been opened up. After this had been put away, Marie read aloud, Pauline embroidered, Leonie did worsted work, Celine drew pictures, while Therese nestled drowsily and contentedly in her father's lap, and he sang to her under his breath. Then came the family prayers which always marked the end of the tranquil day, and, finally, Pauline saw her smallest sister comfortably cuddled down under her canopy of pale rose before she started to bed herself. The unity, the harmony of life at Les Buissonnets, was complete in every detail.

The sisterhood was all so indivisibly knit together that it would be hard to say where the closest bonds were drawn, but it was perhaps between Celine and Therese that the tenderest tie of all existed. They constantly exchanged little gifts, as tokens of their mutual affection; they snuggled in each other's arms in the rose-covered bed. When Pauline came to dress them, Therese held only more clingingly to Celine, insisting that they must not be separated. When she was hardly more than a baby, in Alençon, she had loved to pretend that she and Celine were "two little white doves in the same nest"; she still loved to cuddle close to her youngest sister. They had their garden games, too: some grave, some gay, all marked by charming fantasies; and when Therese was alone

among the "little thickets," she gathered scraps of moss and verdure together, building tiny altars and rural mangers from them and peopling them with small statuettes. The crèche (6) is an object of irresistible attraction to all French children: they crowd the churches at yuletide to see the Christmas story embodied in the figures of Mary and Joseph and the Christ Child, the angels and the Magi, the shepherds and the kindly beasts, which are disposed in simulated stables under symbolic stars. Therese had been with her father to see the lovely lighted crèche at the cathedral, and she was quick to copy it in miniature at Les Buissonnets. Into its creation went all the skill and patience and exquisite artistry of Zelie the lacemaker and Louis the watchmaker, combined with the delicacy of touch and sensitivity of feeling which characterized their daughter's every act. And fragile as were the media which she used, her workmanship had in it a quality which gave them permanence; ephemeral though it seemed, it still survives.

At Christmas there was not only the crèche and the little shoes placed on the hearthstone for the Christ Child to fill. There was also a yule log for the fireplace, and chestnuts and apples were roasted there, as the children clustered round it, listening to the Breton legends which beatify the Feast of the Nativity. Winter was a season which all the children loved, but especially Therese, who had, in very truth, been a "snow baby" herself, and to whom snowflakes, like field flowers, seemed always bright and beautiful. Sunsets delighted her, too, and stars: she loved to watch the colors stream across the sky before the early twilight and then to see the heavens wreathed with diamonds. Once, coming in from her walk, she became conscious, for the first time, of Orion, blazing in all its splendor high above her, and reached ecstatically for her father's hand. "Look, Papa! Look quickly!" she cried. "There is a 'T' in the sky! It must stand for Therese in heaven!"

She believed that her name was written in heaven as im-

plicitly as she believed in the watchfulness of a guardian angel and the companionship of the Christ Child. The simplicity and sincerity of the father's faith flowed into fuller feeling and fuller expression in the daughter, and Louis-Joseph, observing this with loving eyes, began to make their daily walks the occasion of apt allegorical instruction. He taught Therese the difference between wise and unwise almsgiving through the example of the beggars they met on the street. The necessitous case of an underpaid seamstress furnished him with an instance for enlarging on the ethics of meeting financial obligations promptly. A gesture of his head, directed toward strangers who commented audibly on the beauty of the blond hair and pers (7) eyes of the little girl passing by them, brought home to her the banality of bad manners. The respect with which he uncovered his white head and bent his erect form when they met a priest or passed a Calvaire (8) intensified her own desire to attain complete reverence in religion. As naturally as a flower unfolds in the sunshine, the child's character expanded under his tender tutelage.

He took her fishing with him as well as walking, and the pastime suited her spirit, contemplative already, as well as it did his own. Often, too, the entire family went for picnics in the country, and in 1878 they went to Trouville, where Therese saw the sea for the first time. "This spectacle made a profound impression on me and I could not take my eyes off it," she wrote herself of this experience fifteen years later. "The majesty of the sea, the roaring of the waves, all spoke to me of the majesty and might of God. . . . In the evening, at the hour when the sun seemed lost in the immensity of the ocean, leaving behind it only a luminous trail to mark its passage, I went to sit with Pauline on a lonely rock; and I watched for a long time this golden band, which I visualized as the image of grace lighting the way of faithful souls. Then I imagined my own floating over it like a fragile bark with a white sail, and I resolved that I would never misdirect it from this path of glory, but try to steer it surely and swiftly toward celestial harbors." (9)

The imagery with which Therese describes the ecstasy of her first sight of the sea finds its counterpart in her recollections of her early participation in the processions of Corpus Christi. This festival, known in France as La Fête-Dieu, is still celebrated with the pomp and circumstance of bygone ages in Lisieux, as it is in certain small provincial cities. The principal parishes combine to provide a spectacle suitable for the splendor of so glorious a day. From the great archway of the cathedral, at the close of vespers, streams out a mighty company of prelates and priests in gorgeous raiment, choir boys singing songs of adoration, acolytes swinging silver censers and bearing banners embroidered in gold. This processional is attended by children dressed to represent symbolic figures-saints and angels and the Christ Child Himself-and by other children, rose-crowned and clothed in white, who scatter petals along the way which the Host will take. After it march brave battalions of little boys, wearing upon the sleeves of their neat, dark suits the white satin armband which is the badge of their First Holy Communion, and they are followed by long fluttering lines of little girls, in the ankle-length dresses of white organdie, the close white caps and sheer white veils which they have worn for their primary participation in the sacrament. Then come the Children of Mary, their blue ribbons glistening, groups of the religious, the habits of their orders dark against the sunlight, lay organizations of every kind and description. From one end of the city to the other, pausing from time to time at the reposoirs which have been erected at suitable shrines, the procession winds through the cobblestoned streets. On either side of it long strips of snowy cloth, to which flowers are attached, have been stretched, and as the canopied Host passes by, the waiting populace which crowds the sidewalks kneels, in one devout accord, to see this lifted.

The spectacle is arresting, even to the most-casual tran-

sient in the regions in which it is enacted; it is poignantly moving even to one of feeble faith. To an impressionable child, chosen among the elect of those who scatter roses before the chalice, it must represent something unutterably exalted: but few of these children attain the gifts and the grace to put their feelings for it into words, as Therese Martin has done in writing of it to her sister Pauline. "The Fêtes! . . . Ah! what sacred memories this simple word brings back to me. . . . The Fêtes! How much I loved them! You knew so well how to clarify for me the mysteries concealed in each one! Yes, those days, terrestrial though they were, became celestial for me. Above all, I loved the processions of the Holy Sacrament. What a joy it was for me to scatter flowers under the feet of God! But before I let them fall, I flung them high in the air, and never was I so happy as when I saw the petals of my roses touch the Holy Host."

On great and rare occasions, such as this festival of Corpus Christi, Therese came into fleeting contact with other children, and she made a profound impression upon them. Her charm of form and feature were becoming increasingly distinctive, and those who still survive, and who well remember her as she looked at that period, declare that even then there was something angelic in the loveliness of her expression. At the same time, her dress and bearing met the most exacting standards of French taste. The wide sash of rosecolored silk, draped low to meet the mode of the early eighties, which she wore for La Fête-Dieu was perfectly matched to the wreath of flowers that bound her golden hair; her high buttoned boots were as spotlessly white as her longwaisted, smooth-pleated dress. (10) No little girl in Lisieux was more correctly dressed, none was better equipped in every way to take a prominent place among her playmates.

The family group was so sufficient unto itself, however, that it was hardly conscious of a craving for companionship beyond its own compact little circle. But there was always a Sunday dinner of expansive proportions at the home of the Guérins to which the Martins also went, and the Martins in turn were given to suitable gestures of hospitality themselves. Once a year, for example, their friends and relatives were invited in to "assist" at a play enacted by the small sisterhood, which was given in a little pavilion temporarily transformed into a theater and appropriately decorated for the occasion, and at the end of this spectacle there was always an award of prizes for excellence in scholarship. As in the case of the dolls' dresses, Therese "took everything," for she still studied alone and therefore had no competitors, but the highest standards were scrupulously observed, and she was crowned only for those studies for which she had shown special aptitude and in which she had made real progress.

But this seclusion in development and diversion, this solitary striving toward excellence in scholarship, could not, as Louis-Joseph was well aware, suffice his child indefinitely if her education were to be effective and complete. A weaker and more selfish man would perhaps have succumbed to the temptation of continuing to keep her constantly at his side, persuading himself that she would do well enough with only her sisters for playmates and only himself as a mentor. But Louis-Joseph was made of stronger stuff than that. He was not unmindful of the benefits which Marie and Pauline had received at the Visitation in Le Mans and which Leonie and Celine had already begun to enjoy at the Abbaye des Bénédictines at Lisieux. The nuns at this ancient convent. founded by the Countess Lesceline, widow of William, Count of Exmes and cousin of William the Conqueror at the beginning of the eleventh century, were women of cultivated minds as well as of holy habits: they had "applied themselves to forming the characters of young girls who were not only well taught and thoroughly prepared for any duty which might await them but also reverent and modest, lacking in none of the reserve inherent to their sex, aspiring to no rôle beyond their limitations, simple in their manners, serious



THERESE MARTIN AT THE AGE OF EIGHT WITH HER SISTER, CELINE

without pretentiousness or stiffness, and knowing how to be natural instead of wishing to change their own God-given qualities for others less suited to their type and their environment." (11)

It is not surprising, with such standards as these—which are, indeed, characteristic of the best in conventual education everywhere in the world—that the Benedictines of Notre-Dame du Pré had become justly famed as teachers, not only in Lisieux itself but also throughout the department of Calvados. The "best" families of the region, those whom Louis-Joseph most respected for every reason, sent their children there, as boarders if they lived at a distance, as day pupils if they were residents of the city itself. Both Jeanne and Marie Guérin went there; so did Marie and Alexandrine Domin, Louise Delarue and Louise Bellenger, the daughters of the Lepentiers and the Le Princes. The list was not only impressive, it was convincing. When Therese was a little over eight years old, it was decided that she should join the ranks of the day pupils.

THREE

Les Buissonners and the Abbaye des Bénédictines are very far apart.

To go from one to the other it is necessary to cross diagonally the entire city of Lisieux: the boulevard Herbert Fournet, the boulevard Carnot, the Jardin Public, the Place Saint-Pierre, the Grande Rue, the Pont de Caen, the rue de Caen-all these must be traversed. It is a long walk, even for a sturdy little girl, to take twice a day-early every morning and late every afternoon. Yet only when there was one of those heavy snowstorms in which Therese Martin so delighted were she and her elder sister Celine, Marie Guérin and her elder sister Jeanne, stowed in the shelter of a rumbling fiacre to be shaken from side to side as they went clattering over the cobblestones. Otherwise, in every sort of weather-and the Norman climate is given to sudden bursts of rain and driving winds, nor is it often balmy, even in summer-the four little girls went to school on foot. Sometimes Monsieur Martin took them all the way. At other times, he took Celine and Therese as far as the Guérins' house on the Place Saint-Pierre, where they joined their little cousins and continued their walk in care of the Guérins' nurse.

Therese was not overtaxed by the walk: her daily outings with her father had accustomed her to exercise, and though she was a cherished child, she was not a cosseted one. But it is

not only as metric distance is measured that Les Buissonnets and the Abbaye must have seemed far apart to the little girl who, in October 1881, was beginning to go to school in Lisieux. Les Buissonnets was modern, not to say modish of aspect: the Abbaye was over a thousand years old and the very latest of its buildings was already venerable. Its "new" chapel, to be sure, had been erected shortly after the French Revolution, which had robbed it of part of its property, including the "old" chapel which had since become the parish church of Saint-Désir; but even the "new" chapel had long since taken on the tone of the other buildings which made up the convent quadrangle: the eighteenth-century boarding school, the seventeenth-century grand bâtiment-containing the kitchen, the nuns' refectory, and the chapter house-and the fifteenth-century vieux bâtiment-containing the linen rooms, the bakery, and the bindery. Les Buissonnets extended in wide velvety lawns to clumps of glossy shrubbery; the worn-down playground at the Abbaye, shaded though it was with pleasant linden trees, was so constantly trodden over by small active feet that its surface was always scuffled.

The kitchen of Les Buissonnets was fragrant with the scent of home-cooked food, which came hot and hearty to the dining room that opened out of it. The Abbaye's kitchen, beyond the courtyard and the chapel, offered only a succession of tepid dishes brought by a patient Sœur Converse to the distant dining hall of the pupils: a thin bread soup, boiled beef, pain brillé-the peculiar bread of the region-ragouts, and roasts, which followed each other with monotonous regularity. On Tuesdays and Fridays, when baking was done at the Abbaye, there were galettes for the four o'clock tea; more rarely, a thin apple cake called le bourdin. For the most part, one wholesome but unappetizing offering followed another, and the conditions under which these were eaten were scarcely calculated to render them more inviting. The pupils' dining hall itself was, to be sure, an apartment of noble and imposing proportions, and the grouping of the girls at three

long tables—the boarders on either side, the day pupils in the middle—was in accordance with the best traditions of the table d'hôte. Each girl, moreover, had her own couvert—her silver knife, fork, spoon, and napkin ring, which gave an individual touch, and much of this silver was very handsome. Therese's own couvert, afterwards carefully kept at the Abbaye, bore comparison with the famous silverware of Madame de Crequi, also preserved there. But the pupils were not allowed to talk: their natural laughter was smothered, and as they ate their boiled beef and their pain brillé, a nun read tales of unreassuring character to them. Some of them shudder to this day at the memory of the stories of Siberian martyrs, where sufferings were so graphically described that tears fell into the plates from which sympathetic pupils could not eat.

It is easy to continue the chronicle of contrast. Les Buissonnets was the calm retreat of a secluded sisterhood of five, compact and harmonious, where one sister reigned as undisputed queen. The Abbaye was overrun with heterogeneous groups of hearty girls, sixty of them in all, who paid no tribute to any of their fellows and acknowledged leadership begrudgingly. Les Buissonnets was governed by one mentor, white-haired, benign, so wise in the eyes of his youngest daughter, that she felt confident all the problems of France would be solved if he were king; the Abbaye lodged innumerable nuns, black-veiled, black-robed, stiffly coifed, who spoke of strange things. The aspect of life itself seemed changed to the child who had been so tenderly cherished, when, for the first time, the venerable portress, Sœur St. Scholastique, opened the great iron-hinged doors of the imposing entrance on the rue de Caen to admit a new little pupil.

Later, this overwhelming sense of strangeness wore away. The Abbaye has an atmosphere of extraordinary peace and permanence, and Therese eventually became conscious of this. But at first "she must have been haunted sometimes by

the thought of so many holy nuns who had lived in the shade of these walls, a little mysterious for her, and who slept their last sleep there," as Abbé Simon, the Curé of Montreuil-en-Auge, has so well expressed it. "Indeed, this ancient Abbaye had its secrets which could not fail to intrigue a mind as inquiring and mystic as that of this child: the secrets of those galleries with high arcades corroded by time and the chapter room with its shuttered windows of which the nuns never spoke except with reverence; the secrets also of its long past lost in the mists of the ages. I believe that Therese, who loved the stories of medieval times, must often have thought of that far-away Countess of Lesceline who, centuries before, had founded this convent; and also of those great abbesses whose noble names from time to time fell from the lips of her teachers: Madame de Matignon, Madame de Valinglart, Madame de Crequi..."

Intimate acquaintance with her school and its history, deep appreciation of her surroundings and their significance, did indeed come to her in time. In the beginning she was completely overwhelmed. The education given by the nuns, permeated with the Benedictine spirit, was indeed maternal in character. But still there had been a great transition for the little girl, and though this was softened as much as possible for her, Therese inevitably resented it, somewhat as a tender plant taken from the hothouse in the springtime reacts to the fresh air in the garden.

The very clothes she wore were unfamiliar, making her ill at ease and self-conscious. Hitherto, her pretty dresses had been cut from the finest materials, in the latest styles; her sisters took enormous interest and pardonable pride in her appearance. Now, like all the other pupils, she wore a black serge uniform, a white bonnet like that of a postulant—to which, on Sundays, a short white veil was attached—and a short pelerine, black to match the dress in winter, white to match the bonnet in summer. The costume had a certain quaint charm, but Therese was not conscious of this. She

could not change it quickly enough when her father came to fetch her in the evening, and she fairly flung herself into her coat and hat as she rushed out to meet him.

There were five classes in this school, each containing two or three divisions, according to the number of pupils, who generally spent two years in each class, making the complete course at the Abbaye one of ten years; and only the belts which they wore distinguished the pupils of one class from those of another. The pupils in the fifth class—the primary department—wore red belts, those in the fourth class green belts, those in the third class purple belts, those in the second class orange belts, and those in the first class blue belts, while the honor of wearing white belts was reserved for those who had already received their diplomas, but were pursuing advanced and supplementary studies.

Therese skipped the primary department entirely, so the first belt that she wore was green, and she wore this only one year. Then she passed promptly into the "purple" class. She had been younger than most of her classmates to start with, and the promotion which she won so much more quickly than the average pupil put her still further ahead of them. The preliminary lessons which her sister Pauline had so capably directed had been thoroughly and conscientiously pursued; and, besides, Therese loved to study, and she was naturally gifted, so it is not astonishing that her progress was rapid. She herself later confessed to much difficulty in memorizing, but this confession greatly astonished her teachers, for the pains she took with this were never apparent and she "recited" with much feeling and expression. She had no special talent for music, and her talents for painting and poetry were discovered only after she was twenty years old, but she almost invariably led her class in everything except mathematics and penmanship—and the standards in the latter at least must have been exceptionally high, for the samples of her compositions which have been preserved reveal outstanding excellence and grace. The small silver laurel wreath, signifying pre-eminence in scholarship, was nearly always pinned to her uniform, and she carried away "crowns" quite as easily as when she had been the only aspirant for them.

This supremacy in her studies was, of course, highly gratifying to her family, and it commanded the instant respect of her teachers, who were enormously proud of their prize pupil. But it is probable that her talents were less appreciated by most of her classmates. Children are seldom impressed by competence and conscientiousness which surpasses their own. Possibly this is because their comprehension of these qualities is limited by their own mediocrity, and possibly it is because there is nearly always an element of jealousy-unconscious or subconscious though it may be-in their feeling for the companion whose mental and spiritual gifts are superior to their own. Strangely enough, this jealousy seldom seems to extend to the field of recreation. The facile winner of games at a girls' school, the naturally able and agile athlete at a boys' school, is nearly always a general favorite. But students who outstrip all competitors in the classroom are apt to lead lonely lives.

It seems almost certain that Therese was the victim of circumstances such as these. She made no complaint, either then or later—it was never her way to complain. She did not even say that she was lonelier in the crowded classrooms and in the tumultuous playground at the Abbaye than she had ever been in the spacious seclusion of Les Buissonnets. Nevertheless, she suffered. "I did not like games, especially boisterous games—not knowing how to play like other children, I did not feel that I was an agreeable companion. I did my best to imitate the others, but without ever succeeding." Thus she wrote, with characteristic simplicity, in speaking of her school days long after they were over. She had played, joyously enough, at the pavilion and Les Buissonnets, but she could not do so spontaneously when her natural sensitivity became intensified by the unconscious cruelty of her

classmates. With the limitations of their kind, they did not perceive that her great gifts gave her no personal pride, that she had no desire to set herself apart from her companions, much less above them. Her warm little heart was overflowing with loving-kindness toward them. But since they did not realize this, she withdrew further and further into herself.

Once, when she was a very small child, her mother, to test her, had offered her a cent if she would kiss the ground. A cent, to her, was worth a fortune, but she had her proper pride even then. "Oh no, Mamma! I would rather not have the cent than kiss the ground!" she had promptly replied. Now, the friendship of her fellows would have represented to her riches of another sort, but she had too much self-respect to "kiss the ground" to get it. She would not compromise with her own high standards.

On stormy days, instead of romping about the courtyard, the children played on the spacious sheltered terrace which faces due south and flanks the church of Saint-Désir. Here they could spend their recreation period in the fresh air and still be protected from the rain. It was an ideal arrangement. But to reach the terrace, it was necessary to cross part of the convent grounds and consequently, while doing so, to respect the rule of cloistral silence. The teachers found no difficulty in enforcing this rule. Indeed, it was not without a slight sense of awe that the buoyant band of little girls advanced under the vaulted arches of the old cloister, which led on and on to an ancient crucifix standing at the end of the arcade. For the most part, having paused here to cross themselves obediently, they were not sorry to hasten along to surroundings where they felt less constrained. But Therese had no such sense of constraint. Often, she detached herself from the others and, with complete unself-consciousness, stooped to kiss the feet of the great Christ. Then, unhurried and unconfused, she went quietly on to the terrace.

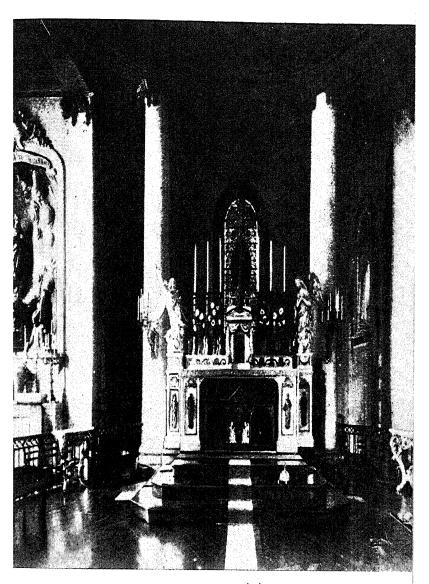
She felt less impulsion toward self-detachment here than she did in the noisy playground: its atmosphere was less alien to her; so she welcomed rainy days with a sense of respite. For the rest, she found her own distractions. She was extremely fond of little children and they returned her affection. The members of the primary class regarded her with unbounded enthusiasm and received her exuberantly into their midst. She told them stories and directed their games, spending much of the time with them which she would naturally have spent with her own contemporaries. She also learned to skirt the playground without seeming to shun it, deep in conversation with her sister Celine, her cousin Marie, or one of her less boisterous classmates, outwardly oblivious of the other girls' indifference, though inwardly bruised by it. She read a great deal, finding in books, as so many others have found, at least one companionship untinged with bitterness. She gathered up, carefully and quietly, for burial "with honor," in a corner of the courtyard, the bodies of the little birds which she found dead under the lindens when their swift flight among the rosy clouds racing across the blue sky above the quadrangle ended in disaster. She sat quietly, holding the doll, dressed like a Carmelite, which her sister Pauline had sent her from the convent-for now that the "Little Queen" was safe in school, the "Lovely Pearl" had left Les Buissonnets also and had begun the novitiate on which her heart had long been set, leaving Marie at the helm of the household.

Therese also availed herself of the permission—freely accorded to pupils who for the most part seldom profited by it —of spending a certain part of the recreation hour in the choir beyond the grille of the chapel, where the children were admitted among the nuns. She meditated a great deal and inquired into the nature of orisons, essaying them herself. All her natural aptitude for contemplation, all her growing appreciation of solitude, expanded in the compensations for comradeship which she had found and in the sanctuary which she had sought.

What were her thoughts as she buried her birds and fon-

dled her doll and began her first orisons? To a certain degree, we can only form conjectures; but some of these guide us, without misdirection, into the future. It is certain, for instance, that Pauline was much in her mind at this time. One evening, when she was doing her homework, she overheard her two eldest sisters speaking softly at the other end of the room; and suddenly she caught the words which Pauline whispered to Marie: "I have just seen the Prioress of Carmel and I shall probably enter next month!" Closing her copybook and throwing down her pen, Therese had rushed over to her and flung herself into her arms, reminding her that she had promised to "wait for her" and "go with her into a desert when she was old enough." Pauline had embraced her tenderly, explaining that in a certain sense convents had replaced deserts as sanctuaries of solitude and that when the right time came, Therese might join her at Carmel if she wished. She had even taken her, by appointment, to see the Prioress, the far-famed Mère Marie de Gonzague, who had received the little girl kindly, telling her, with no air of "talking down" to a child, why postulants must be more than nine years old and assuring her gravely that if she wished to consider the contemplative life when she had reached years of discretion, no obstacles would then be put in her path. The whole experience had made a profound impression on Therese; like another Young Girl, who had lived many centuries before, she "kept all these things carefully in her heart."

But although Pauline was certainly paramount in her mind, it is probably not only of her that she thought. Like all the pupils at the Abbaye, she was devotedly attached to Mère Ste. Placide, the remarkable directress of the boarding school. "The well-rounded education of this lady"—the annals of the Abbaye tell us—"had dowered her with a variety of learning which rendered her instruction attractive. Extreme kindness of heart was an outstanding characteristic of her daily existence: she loved children profoundly, and took pains, in every way, to make their life at school pleasant and



THE CHAPEL AT THE ABBAYE DES BÉNÉDICTINES WHERE
THERESE MARTIN MADE HER FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

as much as possible like family life." These annals also reveal that in the world Mère Ste. Placide had been Isabelle Fallery, a lady of most noble lineage; her grandmother, Aglae Henriette de Boulert, had been lady-in-waiting to the Empress Josephine. Her grandfather, Nicholas François Martin Le Clerc, Esquier, had been a Chevalier of St. Louis and an Officer of the Legion of Honor. Her father had been François Auguste Fallery, Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, and Departmental Treasurer, first at Limoges and later at Saint-Lô. Her mother, Henriette Charlotte Desire Le Clerc-Fallery, a chatelaine worthy of all these great traditions, had desired to retire to a convent as soon as she became a widow, but she had waited to do this until her daughter Isabelle could enter it with her. At a most impressive ceremony, they had taken the veil together, the elder as Mère Ste. Chantalle, the younger as Mère Ste. Placide; and in the cloister they were the admiration of all beholders, as they had been in the world.

The mother was slender, erect, and highly strung; the daughter tall, fair and tranquil: her name was happily chosen, for "Placide" described her well. "Their carriage was so arresting that merely to see them enter the choir was to be conscious of their distinction and their dignity," Helene Hue, who was a classmate of Therese Martin's, still declares. It seems certain that Therese's estimate of the mother and daughter was equally high. She herself has written of Mère Ste. Placide with touching appreciation, and she must have known that this widely traveled and high-born lady, who had moved in the most exalted circles, had vehemently declared that the more she saw of the world the more eagerly she desired to leave it. That she had indeed done at the age of fifteen. Indubitably, Therese reflected on the vocation-so early embraced, so nobly fulfilled-of this beloved teacher, who seemed to her such a paragon of every charm and virtue. Indubitably, the thought of patterning her own life after that of Mère Ste. Placide, of making a profession of faith no less precipitate than hers had been, was interwoven in the child's plastic mind with the thoughts of her sister Pauline. (12)

One day when she was fondling her doll, Sœur Marie-Marguerite, the Converse (13) who had charge of the dishes for the pupils' dining hall, stopped to speak to her, looking her over reflectively. "Well, little Therese," she said shrewdly, "you think a great deal of that doll, don't you? You want to become a Carmelite yourself perhaps, like your sister?" The little girl gazed directly into the nun's eyes with that ethereal expression which was already so arresting to all those who saw it; then she turned back to her doll. "I could say nothing more to her," the Sister confessed, in relating the episode afterwards. "I instinctively knew that I had struck closer home than I had intended, that I had been indiscreet in my question." (13-A)

It is by such reminiscenses as this, that we are constantly guided; we are not limited to conjectures in following this phase of Therese's career. Many of her schoolmates (14) are still living, not to mention her cousin, Jeanne Guérin—now Madame la Néele, the widow of a well-known doctor—who can speak of it with authority. So can the nun who was the supervisor of the pupils at the time Therese was a student, and who, crowned with age and honors, has recently celebrated the fiftieth jubilee of her profession; (15) while one of her teachers—also still living—has written about it with a charm and candor which carry conviction, in a brief but delightful biography entitled La Petite Thérèse à l'Abbaye.

"Indeed Therese was a beautiful and gracious child," remarks an observer quoted in this record, "with long golden curls framing her sweet face, delicate coloring, and a celestial expression about the eyes and the mouth. . . . I can still see her, holding her little prayer book in her hand; the union of childish grace with childish gravity was one of her great characteristics. I was so struck with her that even after fifty years, my first impression of her, confirmed afterwards by many like it, has never been effaced.

"Her usual expression was characterized by an exquisite smile as soon as her tears, which fell rather too facilely and frequently, it must be confessed, had been dried. Her manners were sweet and amiable, her spirit of devotion very deep, her sense of duty meticulous, her aversion to boisterous games and large crowds very marked," the author of these same annals remarks herself, and she goes on to ask: "Was little Therese not essentially the product of her period? Simple, naïve, and candid. Outwardly there was nothing studied, nothing extraordinary about her. For the rest, she was obedient, showing a minute fidelity to the smallest detail of the rules, alarmed with even the semblance of a fault, sometimes to the extent of giving the appearance of being overscrupulous. Habitually gentle and reflective, she occasionally seemed inclined to dreaminess; a slight sadness sometimes pervaded her features. . . . Was she not already acquainted with inward suffering?"

Certainly she must have been; the development of character, the sequence of episodes, unfolds arrestingly before us as we read these lines. The portrait is pellucid, but it is clear that the path of progress was painful. There were, however, interludes of respite and reward in the routine of school life; and there were also the two weekly holidays, Thursdays (16) and Sundays, both of which brought with them their own peculiar pleasures. Thursdays were spent almost invariably at the Jardin de l'Etoile-the Garden of the Star-which was as charming as its own name. It was situated near Les Buissonnets and was controlled-somewhat after the same manner in which Gramercy Park is still controlled in New Yorkby a group of joint proprietors, Monsieur Martin among them. Here Therese found a setting which she could enjoy unrestrainedly with her sisters and her cousins and her more familiar friends. Sundays meant even more to her: if great festivals were rare, still she felt that each week brought her a lesser one, that every Sabbath had its own significance. She had been taught from earliest childhood to "worship the

Lord in the beauty of Holiness"; she knew how "to be glad in it."

Besides the regular recurrent weekly holidays, there was occasionally a short trip, notably one which Therese spent with her father in making a round of visits to friends who owned fine country places in the neighborhood of Alençon, among these the Château de Saint-Denis and the Château de Grogny. "Here she was obliged to keep up her end, to dress for dinner, to rub up against ladies of fashion, to listen to their frivolous suggestions, to reply to their smiles and their compliments, to permit herself to be fêted, pampered, and admired. The pageant of flower-decked tables, brilliant drawing-rooms, well-raked gardens, imposing servants-in a word, all imaginable amenities and commodities of life were spread out before her. . . . It was enough to dazzle a delicate little girl . . . though she could eventually have reigned herself in this vapid and elegant society, had she wished to do so. She would have needed only to abandon herself to her own gifts and graces. But in these exalted circles God was served-if it may be called serving-without sacrifice of any worldly pleasure. This was what struck the child above everything else and what restrained her from succumbing to any latent tendency for such facile enjoyment." (17)

It is thus that one of her most able but least accurate biographers has described her round of visits, and for once his version of her story is not unlike her own, except that naturally she pays herself no compliments. (18) So there is nothing that a minor chronicler needs to add regarding it. In addition to this short trip, however, there are also several others to be considered. Therese's summer vacations were usually spent at the side of the sea, for the twin beaches of Trouville and Deauville were already beginning to attain, in the eighties, some of the vogue which has since become so extended. The Guérins rented a "villa"—a "cottage," as we would call it—at one or the other of the beaches for the season every year, and they invited their nieces, turn and turn

about, to visit them there. Therese spent most of the month of May with them in 1885 at the Châlet Colombe on the quai de la Touques in Deauville: a gay little house of many gables set in the midst of a garden with a pretty view of the Seine River and the quai Joinville, which is always very much alive. The same year, in September, she and Celine both went to visit the Guérins in Trouville at the Villa Marie Rose on the rue Charlemagne: a high house with a blank façade, built flush to the street and flanked on either side by similarly flat and unalluring structures. This offered a far less attractive setting for a summer's outing than the Châlet Colombe, but it is still highly regarded as the scene of several memorable episodes in the life of its most famous occupant; and the trip which took her to it is the one which Therese herself describes more fully than any other holiday excursion.

In 1886 and 1887, she returned to Trouville again, when her headquarters, both times, were at the Châlet des Lilas: a somewhat stilted and rococo cottage, barricaded by frail balconies, but charmingly framed by shrubberies and trees and commanding a splendid sweep of the sea. Her thoughts by then were centered on other things; so it is not strange that later on she scarcely referred to these visits. She has, however, told us more about the earlier ones: of her pleasure in the sky-blue hair ribbons which her aunt bought for her, of her donkey rides, of her crab fishing. (Swimming, at this period, was not among those sports in which the well-brought-up young girl indulged very generally!) She has also related an experience which she says taught her "never to imitate others" and to understand, as she had not done before, the significance of the story of "The Donkey and the Dog" which, like many other fables by La Fontaine, she had learned in school.

"My cousin Marie often had migraine; and on these occasions my aunt coddled her and lavished the most tender names upon her, without ever receiving any other response than tears, accompanied by the invariable complaint, 'I have

a headache!' I myself had a headache almost every day, and it had never occurred to me to complain about it, but one fine evening I decided to imitate Marie. Accordingly, I flung myself weeping into an armchair in the corner of the drawing-room, and presently my cousin Jeanne, whom I loved devotedly, came rushing over to me, while my aunt hastened to ask what the cause of my tears might be. I answered, like Marie, 'I have a headache!'

"It appears that it did not become me to complain. I was never able to make anyone believe that my headache had made me cry. Instead of caressing me like a child, as she usually did, my aunt spoke to me as severely as if I had been grown up. Even Jeanne reproached me, very gently to be sure, but in pained accents, for having been lacking in candor and simplicity toward my aunt, for not having told her the real cause of my tears, which she thought must be due to worry." (19)

The headaches which had begun to afflict Therese "almost every day" were destined to affect her development to a disastrous degree. They marked the beginning of an illness which was nearly fatal in its consequences, and from which her recovery seemed miraculous both to her and to those who were with her at that time; and they eventually led to a condition of general debility which necessitated her withdrawal from school. Nowadays we are apt to regard such symptoms with a certain amount of impatience, to insist that if eyesight, digestion, and nerves are all in good running order-as thanks to modern surveillance and modern science they can and should be-there is no reason why anyone should be hampered by them. The term "sick headache," together with "galloping consumption," "going into a decline," "summer complaint," "cholera morbus," and "childbed fever," has fortunately almost passed from our vocabulary, along with the diseases designated; while the descriptive and inclusive term "migraine," which takes into account a general condition of depression as well as acute local discomfort, has never come into extended use or achieved extended comprehension outside of France. But prior to the present generation, headaches, in their various prostrating forms, numbered their victims by thousands, and no one who can remember—either through intimate observation or devastating personal experience—the widespread distress which they caused and the frequent "declines" to which they led is likely to forget them.

Sickrooms from which every ray of light was excluded until sundown—when, for some unknown reason there was usually some improvement—bandages drenched in cold Cologne water and applied to throbbing temples, foot baths administered "to draw down the pain," hushed and sympathetic households, grave and puzzled family physicians carrying small bags filled with large pills—all these, like the ravaging observance of mourning previously discussed, are still well within the memory of man and even more especially of woman, who alas! was always the most thorough connoisseur of headaches. The feminine contemporaries of Therese Martin and their daughters will never be guilty of underestimating what she endured from the migraine of which some of her male biographers have presented so distorted a picture.

So it is only with modern youth and modern doctors that there is occasion to plead for understanding on this score. There is, perhaps, strangely enough, more occasion to explain and interpret the character of the joy which marked the outstanding event in Therese's early adolescence than any stage of her youthful sufferings, either mental or physical.

This event was indubitably the celebration of her First Holy Communion.



The Sacrament of the Last Supper is venerated in all Christian countries by the adherents of all Christian creeds. But it is notably in the Latin countries of Europe that the necessary preparation for this and the primary participation in it become a paramount preoccupation in the existence of the majority of all the people. In provincial France particularly, the First Holy Communion is surrounded with such circumstances and pervaded with such splendor that for the time being it obscures every other consideration; and its attendant activities embrace almost every phase of daily life.

The Anglo-Saxon, whose religion is generally "a thing apart," instead of being interwoven with every fiber of his life, sometimes finds it hard to understand that so sacred a ceremony should be attended by so much secular rejoicing; that it should be made the occasion of the presentation and exchange of such trivial gifts as candy and cards and such practical gifts as watches and fountain pens; that a church service should be a prelude to a gala breakfast; that a special costume should be classed next to a special catechism in the scheme of preparation. The phrases, familiarly used to orient time or mark an outstanding event: "That was just before I made my First Communion"; "It is five years now since I made my First Communion"; "My sister was married at the

same time that I made my First Communion"; fall on unaccustomed ears; and just as the presence of a crucifix in a room, primarily planned for comfort or pleasure, like a family living room, seems to the Anglo-Saxon a sign of sacrilege and not a mark of respect, so the sight of bonbon boxes decorated with holy pictures and dolls dressed in the traditional white organdie of the child communicant strike an inharmonious note for him.

In even greater measure, the state of ecstatic self-abandonment to which children are brought, the unrestrained expression of rapture which they are taught or encouraged to voice on this occasion, affront his natural reserve which for him is intensified a hundred times when it comes to a question of religion. In short, the Anglo-Saxon is often greatly puzzled and occasionally slightly offended by an exhibition which he realizes represents something sacred, but of which the Latin expression is wholly alien to him.

Such persons as these, sympathetic as they may be to the story of Therese Martin's school days, sometimes stumble a little when they come to the story of her First Communion. Yet, if they will study it with open minds and willing hearts, they will comprehend not only many phases of Latin psychology but—what is infinitely more important—also many universal aspects of mystic life which have hitherto been hidden from them. For in her is clarified, in her is beatified, an experience at one and the same time common and consecrated throughout long ages in many parts of the world.

She approached this experience with a rapture which made her oblivious, for the first time, of all the ordeals connected with her life at school. "The occasion of my First Communion will always be one of unclouded memory," she wrote of it herself. "... Every evening [for several months before this took place] I sat for a long time beside Marie, eager to listen to her words—and what wonderful things she told me! It seems to me that something constantly passed

from her great and generous heart into my own. As the warriors of old taught their children the practice of arms, so she interpreted the battle of life, kindling my ardor and showing me the palm of victory. She spoke to me of the immortal riches which are so freely bestowed, of the misfortune of trampling underfoot the benefits toward which one need only incline in order to harvest them."

Marie, whose genuine piety was always tempered by a sound sense of proportion, wisely set a limit on the length of time which her little sister spent in prayer and meditation every day. But the lessons given her at home were supplemented by those which she received at school. Every day she went bounding joyfully off to the catechism classes which took place in the convent chapel on Thursdays and Sundays and in the grand parloir, a noble apartment wainscoted in mellow paneling, on other days. In either case, three benches were arranged to form a double L opposite the seat occupied by Monsieur l'Abbé Domain, the grave-faced, round-cheeked, full-bodied chaplain of the Abbaye, who was closely related to the two little girls of the same name in Therese's own class. Therese herself was always so early that she secured the seat nearest to him, where she fastened her eyes eagerly upon him and drank in every word that he said. The little girl who sat opposite her, Helene Doise, remembers to this day how she looked as she sat there, her gentle little face kindled with interest, the sun, streaming in through the mullioned windows behind her, falling full on her golden hair. After a lapse of over half a century, the expression on the fine old face of Mère Ste. Marie, the Benedictine nun who "in the world" was Helene Doise, lights to radiance as she talks about Therese's hair with the sun streaming across it. "It was the most beautiful hair I ever saw in my life, Madame," she says, her rich voice suddenly vibrant, as she sits talking about Therese with a privileged visitor who has been admitted to the same parloir where those famous catechism classes were

held. "I shall never forget it, never, never . . . never. . . ." (19-A)

She recreates the scene as she saw it, and through her eyes we may recreate it, too: the little girls in their black dresses and white bonnets, the chaplain in his long cassock with a rug spread over his knees for warmth, the hard benches, the carved paneling, the shafts of sunshine. It is a pleasant picture, familiarized by custom and habit, illumined by faith and light. The little girl whose golden hair caught and held the rays which fell from the mullioned windows, until they shone like a glory around her, brought to her classes a searching spirit as well as a trustful one. Questions and answers were not merely a matter of dull routine for her, they were subjects for inquiry, for discussion, for consideration. Her eagerness aroused the torpid class. Her thirst for knowledge, for understanding, was contagious: she mastered material herself and she spurred her companions on to master it. The chaplain called her his "Little Doctor of Theology." After the first examination, he said to one of the nuns with a chuckle of pride, "I tried to trip Therese up, but I didn't succeed. All her answers were admirable."

Therese chose the cards which she was to give her classmates, as keepsakes of their First Holy Communion, together with a thoughtful appreciation of symbolism. It is a moving experience to sit in the *parloir* listening to reminiscences of the catechism classes; it is no less moving to hold in one's own fingers a little card on the back of which is written in a handwriting infinitely delicate and fine:

> Souvenir de Ma 1er Communion—8 Mai '84 Thérèse Martin à Louise Bellenger. (20)

The design consists of two pink rosebuds on either side of a rose surrounded with a crown of thorns and surmounted by a flaming heart and a cross toward which rays descend from the wings of a white dove. Underneath are written these words:

Enter into the heart of Jesus as into a crucible of love which purifies from every stain.

This card was reverently brought to the Abbaye by an old pupil, Madame Alexandre Périn, née Louise Bellenger, returning for a fête day. But there were a number of others carefully preserved among the nuns themselves and in the old oratory. One of these represents a chalice surmounted by a cross at the top of a rectangle wreathed with wheat and grapes, which are intertwined with marguerites, and at the bottom of which is one large rose. On the rectangle are written the words:

HE WHO
RECEIVES ME
MUST
LIVE FOR
ME

ST. JOHN.

And underneath again appear the words:

Memento of First Communion

This card is especially interesting because it bears on the back a complete record of date, place, and communicants, printed in fine Gothic type:



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CARD OF THERESE MARTIN

THURSDAY, MAY 8, 1884 THE FOLLOWING HAVE MADE THEIR FIRST COMMUNION

IN

THE CHAPEL OF THE BENEDICTINES OF LISIEUX

MLLES.	MLLES.
M. DOMIN	A. DOMIN
J. LESFORGETTES	J. RAOUL
T. MARTIN	L. DELARUE

F. MALLING

THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED TO THE COMMUNION TABLE BY

MLLES.	MLLES.
M. COUPEY	M. POTIER
S. DELAVAL	J. LE PRINCE
L. VERRIER	C. LEPENTIER
H. LALISELLE	H. HUE
L. BELLENGER	A. DUBOIS

I RENOUNCE THE DEVIL AND ALL HIS WORKS AND I CONSECRATE MYSELF TO JESUS CHRIST.

The question of cards having been decided, the details of the family fête to be given at Les Buissonnets on the evening of May 8th were discussed, and the subject of the dress which Therese was to wear was also given due attention. It was, of course, made of white organdie—the traditional tissue of the communicant—with a long, full skirt and long, full veil, also prescribed by immemorial custom. Both fell, in sheer straight lengths, almost to the floor. Unlike the dress she had worn for La Fête-Dieu, this one was not lace-trimmed, except for a fine lace ruching at the throat, but like the other it was wide-girdled, in white this time. The sash was knotted in great loops of grosgrain ribbon on one side of the slender waist; from the other side fell a cascade of white roses. It was as

fresh as a flower, as fragile as sea foam, as light as a cloud drifting over a star.

Day pupils were, as a rule, required to enter the boarding school as regular boarding pupils for at least a month before the date set for their First Holy Communion, in order that there might be no disturbance in their routine, augmented at this time to include supplementary sacred studies. In the case of Therese Martin, her preparation in these was adjudged to be already so thorough, her understanding so complete, and her attitude so reverent, that this length of time was abridged. She was installed only for a week in the long paved dormitory, bare except for a crucifix at one end and the line of little white beds, completely enveloped in soft draperies, which flanked it on either side. After all the children were in bed at night, Mère Ste. Placide came into the dormitory with her little lantern in her hand, her light step tapping gently against the tiles. She paused before each bed, parted the snowy curtains, bent over. Then, as she smoothed down the cool linen sheets and tucked them firmly in around the hand-woven blankets, she stooped to kiss the forehead of the child who lay there, whispering, as she did so, "Good night, my darling! Sleep well, and may God bless you."

Therese admired Mère Ste. Placide greatly. Lying very still in the benignant darkness, which from infancy she had been taught to love and not to fear, she listened for the light step against the tiles and watched for the first rays that the little lantern would shed through the gloom, as she waited expectantly for the moment when her own curtains should be parted, her own sheets smoothed, her own forehead brushed with caressing lips. Finally, she decided to share with Mère Ste. Placide the secret which she held so close to her little heart.

"Madame," (21) she said breathlessly, "I love you very much. I am going to confide a great secret to you."

With an air of mystery, she drew from under her pillow the booklet of private devotions preparatory to communion which had been given her by her sister Pauline and which was the greatest of her treasures. Usually, she kept it carefully hidden, but now she showed it to her teacher with shining eyes. Mère Ste. Placide opened it delicately and lightly turned over its leaves, remarking as she did so that Therese was greatly privileged in possessing it. It was by no means the only time that the nun gave the little girl, who had been so early bereft of her own mother, the feeling that she was surrounded by a mother's fostering care.

At last, the long awaited day arrived, the one which seemed to Therese the most wonderful day of her life. The children were awakened at sunrise; the light which suddenly flooded the tiled dormitory tinged the white-curtained beds with pale rose. The little girls flung their arms around each other and raised their soft upturned faces to receive their teachers' kisses as they slipped from between the sheets and pattered across the floor. Little jealousies, little difficulties, little griefs, had all evaporated in the glow of this most glorious dawn. The white dresses and white veils were spread out like snowdrifts in the large dressing room; then they were lightly lifted up and gently drawn down over small shining heads and smooth little shoulders. Sashes were tied, gloves buttoned, slippers buckled, rosaries slid into place. Finally, the last child was ready. Breathlessly, buoyantly, the little girls passed down the long wooden stairs, each one holding up the full draperies of the child in front of her, that their spotlessness might remain immaculate. Then, shaking these soft white billows down into place again, the children passed on through the gallery. Some of them had begun to tremble a little, but it was with excitement, with anticipation, with exultationnot with fear. The moment for which they had prepared for so long, which had approached so slowly at first, so swiftly at the end, was now upon them. The doors were suddenly opened wide, and the sound of the morning canticle rang out. Then the chapel engulfed them. From that moment, the ground on which they trod was holy.

"There are perfumes so precious that they lose their essence if they are opened to the air. There are thoughts so sanctified that once they are expressed in earthly language, some of their sacred sense is lost." These are the words with which Therese clothed in beauty the reticence that described the supreme experience of her childhood. At the altar rail, so reverently approached, so radiantly found, she seemed to meet her Maker face to face, to feel her being merged in His. "Savior, with love I consecrate my life to Thee!" she breathed. The words rose from her lips like a wellspring. Then joy ineffable flowed over her, and she spoke no more.

FIVE

WHEN THERESE was thirteen years old, she left the Abbaye, and a new order of things began.

She went, several times a week, to the home of an accomplished woman, Mlle. Papineau, who directed her studies expertly. Scholastically, she progressed even more rapidly than she had ever done before. But her lessons were by no means confined to textbooks; they included, both through precept and by example, considerable instruction in the social graces. She was installed in the family parlor, charmingly furnished with valuable antiques, in which her teacher's mother, a lady of the old school, was accustomed to receive her visitors. A bright fire burned on a well-garnished hearth, suitable refreshments were served during the course of the afternoon, and Therese's recitations were made to the accompaniment of elegant conversation. Distracting as this occasionally proved, it was not without its beneficial side: the atmosphere, though formal, was distinctly friendly, and Therese, who was as sensitive to kindness as she was to criticism, glowed with secret pleasure when the callers' comments took a personal turn which was complimentary to her. Cheered, instead of depressed, by the milieu in which she found herself, she began to expand like a flower. When she returned to the Abbaye, to take up her membership in the Children of Mary and to follow special courses in domestic science, she did so

with fresh color in her cheeks and invulnerable peace of mind. The prostrating migraine, the incessant *scruples*—the depression and worry of other days—had been relegated to the limbo of past things.

She had reached the age when it was suitable for her to go out a little in the evening, and though life at Les Buissonnets continued to be very quiet, it was gayer at the Guérins'. Their pleasant little home on the corner of the Place Saint-Pierre and the Grande Rue was a center of attraction for a cultured and congenial circle, an agreeable meeting place for kindred spirits. Isidore Guérin's profession brought him into contact with pharmacists and physicians of standing. Doctor Joseph Colombe, the owner of the Châlet Colombe at Deauville, and his family were frequent guests there; so was Francis la Néele, whom Jeanne later married; so was Henri Chéron, a young pharmaceutical student for whom the Fates were reserving a very different destiny from that of a chemist in a small provincial city. There was hardly a hint at the moment of those exceptional talents which were later to make him outstanding in the political field in France as a deputy, a senator, and a member of a President's Cabinet, and bring him universal acclaim as an orator. But neither was there any indication that the fair-haired little girl who "assisted" so unobtrusively at these gatherings would be revered in every corner of Christendom. It is by no means the first or only time that a scene which a more sophisticated group would have regarded with a slight condescension has been the setting for statesmen and saints whose memory has been venerated long after the sophisticates have passed into utter oblivion.

At Les Buissonnets, the feast of Christmas continued to remain, as it always had been, the supreme festival of the year. The carols and the crèche, the midnight Mass and the shepherds' story, spread their age-old splendor over the quiet family assembled there, as they have on so many others when, on the occasion of the Christ Child's birth, "two or three have been gathered together in His name." The yule log was still

lighted, too, and small shoes—square and stubby no longer, but neat and narrow instead—were still placed beside it, ready to receive "surprises." But something spontaneous, something jubilant, had passed forever from the hour when gifts were opened up. Marie, as well as Pauline, was at Carmel; Celine was nearly eighteen; Therese herself was adolescent. Her father continued to treat her like a child, but subconsciously he had begun to resent the traits of temperament which indicated such treatment. His disposition was so equable, and his affection for his youngest daughter so strong, that it was a long time before this resentment came to the surface. But at last he gave tongue, unexpectedly, to his inner feelings.

"For a big girl like Therese," he said in a voice of annoyance, "'surprises' of this sort are a little childish! I hope it is the last year for them!"

The utterance had been made, almost involuntarily, to Celine, as the family came in from midnight Mass. Therese, who was on her way upstairs to remove her wraps, overheard it. Instantly, her eyes filled with the tears which frequently overflowed on such slight provocation and sometimes, so far as anyone could judge, for none at all. Celine, quickly guessing what must have happened, slipped upstairs in her turn and whispered to her sister.

"Don't come down right away. If you did, you would cry too hard in front of Papa while you were looking at the 'surprises.' Wait a few minutes."

She returned to her father; so swiftly that he had not noticed her absence. A few minutes later, Therese, wreathed in smiles, rejoined them. Lifting her pretty shoes from the hearth, she began to draw her presents from them with exclamations of pleasure. Louis-Joseph, his moment of exasperation over, watched her fondly and indulgently. He had no idea that she knew of his transitory annoyance; nor was it until long afterwards that he was aware how self-searchingly she had spent the interval between her return from church and her arrival at the fireside or how great a transformation

had been wrought in her temperament in that brief period of "Christmas Grace."

Never again would she need to say of herself, shamefacedly. "I cried, and when I was reproached, I cried again because I had done so before!" As Monseigneur Laveille, her most reliable and distinguished biographer, has stated, "She had recaptured, for once and for all, that strength of character. that serenity of soul, which she had forfeited when she was four years old." With swift clairvoyance, she had seen, as she knelt alone in her room, seeking the certain solace and the sure sustenance of prayer, that the time had come when she must put away childish things. Up to then, she had indeed spoken as a child, understood as a child, thought as a child, but that was past. She was on the brink of womanhood now; she must accept its burdens, its responsibilities, its cares, in a womanly way. And if she were to do all this worthily, she must also do it smilingly. She must not permit her feelings to overwhelm her or her sensitivity to submerge her. Self-control assumed its proper proportions as a major virtue, and she recognized that tears were the attribute of a weakling, while hers was a heritage of strength. Her father, who was also her hero, had been justified in his chagrin. She was descended from a long line of soldiers: courage had been their armor, nobility their shield. Nor was it only the men among her forbears who had been valiant; the fortitude of her mother had been steadfast against every storm and every danger, and it had a shining quality, also. The glory of it, undimmed by a decade of separation, enveloped the daughter of Zelie again. It was as if death had never divided them, as if they were once more united, as if there had been no exile from a presence which had always created joy and emanated light.

"The spirit of loving-kindness filled my heart, together with my knowledge of the need of self-forgetfulness," she wrote of this experience afterwards. "From that hour onward, I was happy." (22) And in very truth, this resurgence of self-command, this revival of rapture, was not the mood of the moment. It marked the beginning of a second period when Therese was, in very truth, "the joy of the entire family." Leonie repeats the expression, word for word, which their mother had used to describe Therese ten years earlier. "The servants came to love her very much also," the elder sister adds, "because as she was always about the house at this time, the kindness, the tranquillity, and the thoughtfulness of her character were all revealed in her person. She forgot herself completely in order to give pleasure to others. The evenness of her disposition was so unaffected and seemed to come so naturally to her, that no one would have guessed that she made constant self-sacrifices to achieve it." (23)

She had become acutely conscious of the drudgery of domestic service, unrelieved in France, even today, of those burdensome and ugly aspects which have been so largely altered elsewhere. Like poverty and the suffering of little children, it had touched her tender heart. "I was very sorry for persons in service," she said later on. "I am glad that in heaven everyone will be ranked by merit, not by riches. What compensations the poor and powerless will have then!" For the first time, she began to take over certain household duties herself, thus lightening the labors of the hard-worked general maid; and the bestowal of alms, like the teaching of poor children, became a regular part of her routine. It was understood throughout Lisieux that the needy had only to present themselves at Les Buissonnets to receive rations; and if Tom, the faithful spaniel, who still survived, regarded these mendicants with a less lenient eye than his little mistress and signified his distrust of beggars with barks and growls, still no one went away hungry. Therese, being Norman to the very marrow of her bones, had probably never heard the Saxon definition of a lady as a "giver of bread"; yet without knowledge of it, she exemplified it. It is not the least appealing of her attributes.

Life flowed along serenely and uneventfully. Therese has described it herself, as she visualized it, in a poem that arrest-

ingly recalls one like it in feeling, though not in form, by Rupert Brooke. Even the titles are similar: Ce que j'aimais and These I Have Loved.

Oh! que j'aime la souvenance Des jours bénis de mon enfance! Pour garder la fleur de mon innocence, Le Seigneur m'entoura toujours D'amour.

O souvenir, tu me reposes . . . Tu me rappelles bein des choses . . . Les repas du soir, le parfum des roses, Les Buissonnets pleins de gaieté,

L'été.

With everything going so well at home, Monsieur Martin had felt justified in indulging his taste for travel and had taken a long trip with his friend, the vicar of the church of Saint-Jacques, visiting, in the course of it, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Turkey. He had seen successively the museums of Munich, the glories of St. Sophia and the Golden Horn, and the bridges of Vienna-"more wonderful than anything I have ever beheld, even in Paris," as he himself had written to his daughters, betraying the typical surprise of the average Frenchman upon discovering that all the wonders of the world are not concentrated in his own country. Visions of hitherto unimagined splendor had opened up before him, and he had now begun to consider the advisability of giving similar opportunities to his own daughters. Monseigneur Germain, the Bishop of Coutances, who was well known to Louis-Joseph, was organizing an expedition which had Rome as its ultimate objective, but which was planned upon lines comprehensive enough to include a good deal of general sightseeing through Italy. A number of distinguished Normans had already signified their intention of joining this party, and Monsieur Martin was playing with the idea of doing so, too. Meanwhile, since there was no need of an immediate decision on this point, he was permitting himself a period of quiet relaxation in Lisieux. He was already sixty-four years old, and though he was still erect and active, his health was less vigorous than it had been in earlier manhood. His business affairs had never been in better condition. He had reached the age of well-earned ease, and he was prepared to enjoy it.

One spring evening, after having returned from vespers, he seated himself, as he so often did, in the garden, to watch the sunset and see the shadows lengthen underneath the trees. This hour of the day, so glamorous and yet so tranquil, which comes "between the dark and the daylight," was one that always moved his meditative mind and suited his serene spirit. A profound sense of peace descended on him as the mellow light of June deepened into gold, and the only sound that pierced the stillness came from the throat of a bird singing in the thicket beside him. Then he became aware that he was no longer alone. His daughter Therese had come across the lawn so quietly that he had not heard her light footstep; now she was seated beside him, with a strange expression on her lovely face.

"What is it, my child?" he asked gently. "Is something troubling you? Tell me."

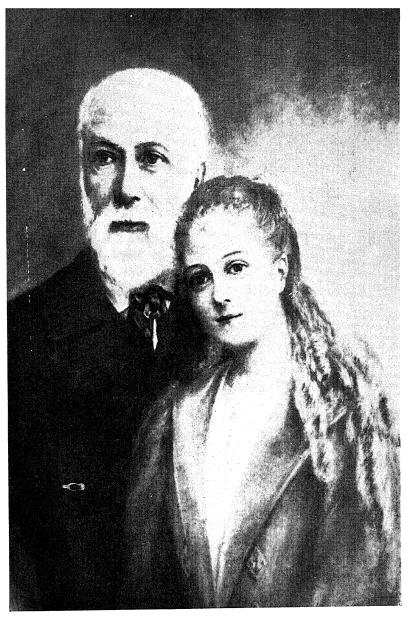
She did not answer him at once, and, gazing at her attentively, he realized that not for a long time had he seen her look so grave; although she was completely composed, there were tears in her eyes. Since that blessed period of "Christmas Grace," she had seemed so consistently joyous that he scarcely thought of her any longer as otherwise. Now there was an earnestness in her face which he could not interpret. He rose, and, putting his arm around her, he began to walk slowly up and down with her at his side, still holding her embraced, waiting for her to speak.

At last, quietly, unfalteringly, without either preamble or discursiveness, she told him that she wished to enter the Carmelite Convent.

His first reaction was the natural one of great shock. He had seen the cloister close forever on his two elder daughters; and though, in principle, he had always hoped his children might fulfill the vocation that he had missed, in practice, the prospect of losing Therese, his best-beloved, overwhelmed him with grief. Like many another man before and since, he was appalled at the literal answer to his own most fervent prayer. For an instant, all he could visualize was the emptiness of a home ravaged of her sweet and gracious presence, of the imminence of an old age unsolaced by her gentle ministrations. The tears which a strong and reserved man so seldom sheds came to his eyes and rolled down his cheeks. Blinded, he could not look at her. Choking, he did not speak to her.

He made a supreme effort. Deliberately, but delicately, he reminded her of her extreme youth. Then he encouraged her to give him her reasons for wishing to take such a portentous step; and he listened, without impatience or interruption, to all that came rushing to her lips now that the floodgates were at last released. She had not come to a precipitate decision, she told him; she had only waited for a propitious moment to tell him of her heart's desire. She had been sure of her vocation for years already: the idea had first entered her mind when, as a little child, she had heard the possibility of Pauline's profession of faith discussed. Perhaps, it had been hardly more than a fantasy then. But since-since -it had assumed form, it had taken substance. Long before she left the Abbaye des Bénédictines she had been certain what her destiny must be. She had been hoping that she might begin to fulfill it at the time of their greatest festival, on the anniversary of the "Christmas Grace."

There is faith so great that it can indeed move mountains; there are convictions so strong that they can convulse con-



DRAWING OF THERESE MARTIN WITH HER FATHER,

MADE BY HER SISTER, CELINE

tinents. Even unbelievers bow before the one, even weaklings and waverers draw courage and purpose from the other. Louis-Joseph's own faith was limitless, his own conviction steadfast. He did not need to be influenced, he needed only to be resigned.

He heard his daughter through to the end. While she spoke, he slowly regained his self-mastery. He had yearned for a child who should be a savior of souls. Now he knew—subconsciously, it is true, but none the less surely—that in some mysterious way there had been a response to this yearning. He had not been given a son who in time might become a great missionary. But among his daughters he had been vouchsafed one who was to join the mystic company of those who are "blessed among women," sometimes in the cloister and sometimes on the hearth, but always in the sight of God.

He bowed his head with a gesture of self-abnegation. Then, walking slowly over to the wall, he plucked from it one of the lilylike flowers, soft-textured and white-petaled, which clustered above it and offered this to Therese.

She saw in it the accepted symbol of the offering she wished to make of herself.



In the eighties, a girl who announced she wished to pursue some higher education which would take her away from the family hearthstone was still almost universally regarded as being willful, pedantic, and unfeminine. A battle royal usually followed such a proclamation. Did she wish to be branded as a bluestocking? Did she wish to risk her reputation by going about alone, Heaven knows in what Bohemian circles? Did she wish to throw away every chance of making a suitable marriage? At such moments, the holy state of matrimony was duly extolled. But if, on the other hand, she made the equally independent announcement that she had given her heart and desired to give her hand to some man of her own inexperienced choosing, she called forth even louder exclamations of horror: At her age she could not possibly know her own mind! It was unthinkable that she should reveal such rashness! Later on, of course, her parents would be glad to see that she met "just the right person." But in the meantime, she must put thoughts so unbecoming to maidenly modesty out of her head.

Some of the girls thus browbeaten meekly bowed their heads and, as a rule, led embittered and impoverished lives as a result. Others declined to be diverted from their manifest destiny and set out to follow it, taking the bit in their teeth. Years later, the very relatives who had done their best to

thwart them were usually the first to boast of the distinguished degrees conferred upon Susan for exceptional excellence in scholarship or to enlarge complacently on the fact that Helena's husband had done very well for himself, that her home was harmonious and her children charming. But, for the time being, it took great strength of character to oppose them.

The very young girl wishing to become a nun, especially a cloistered nun, has usually found herself confronted with an even greater hostility, with an even louder outcry to the effect that she cannot possibly know her own mind. The desire to care for the sick, the aged, and the helpless, or to go to foreign lands and convert the heathen, is more comprehensible to the average mentality, which grasps the doctrine of work with greater ease than the doctrine of worship. But to shut oneself up for contemplation and prayer-! A writer or a painter, of course, must be permitted to work without interruption if the fruit of his labors is to be good, if his art is to flourish and expand. A great executive or a great industrialist must be sheltered from intrusion not only for his own sake but also for the sake of the thousands whom he directs, the tens of thousands whose welfare he affects. But surely a supplicant at the throne of Grace can pray any time, any place! There is no need for a cloister for that! Years afterwards, when they see what beauty and peace this cloister has brought into the life of the woman who has sought it, what a vital force throughout the world her influence has become, they acclaim her as a saint. It is the same old story in a different, a more poignant, and a more exalted, form.

Therese Martin, who always saw straight and thought clearly, was certainly not unaware of the arguments which would be used against her, though it is doubtful if she realized at first how widespread the opposition to her great unswerving purpose would be. But with her father as her ally, she prepared to meet her adversaries with composure. Her sisters already knew of her determined desire to become a nun, but since Pauline and Marie had already entered Car-

mel themselves, they would have been the last to oppose such a plan on her part. Leonie and Celine felt some natural pangs at the prospect of parting with her, but these were tempered by the fact that each felt her own heart turning instinctively toward the cloister also, though this impulsion had not yet begun to take form and substance. However, when the project was presented to the next of kin—the Guérin family—there was a veritable explosion.

Since her mother's death, Isidore Guérin had taken Zelie's place as Therese's guardian; consequently, even with her father's consent, she could not leave her home without obtaining her uncle's also; and he reacted with considerable violence to the suggestion that she should do so. "It would be an unheard-of thing!" he fulminated; "a scandal throughout France, if a child fifteen years old were allowed to enter a Carmelite Convent! I shall oppose it by every means within my power! And I assure you it would take a miracle to make me change my mind!"

He dismissed his niece on this note. It was certainly not an encouraging one. Isidore Guérin was regarded, and rightly, as being somewhat more worldly-wise than the rest of the family. He had spent a certain part of his youth in Paris, where at times, his conduct had caused his sister some slight anxiety, but where he had enlarged the sphere of his experience in a way that had become extremely useful, in later life, to himself, to his family, and to the community in which he lived. He was a man of great force of character, shrewd intelligence, and wide influence. His opposition was formidable.

A girl fifteen years old is not a child. She is capable of coping with the complete experience of love and with the ordeal of maternity, which, in the flesh, represent her supreme fulfillment. She is equally capable of complete spiritual experience and expression. Therese must have become weary beyond utterance of the trite phrase, "This child of fifteen!", which was dinned into her ears both then and later.

But she showed admirable tact in handling her uncle. She did not continue to besiege him with importunities. She went home and left him strictly alone for several days. When she next presented herself at the solid old house on the Place Saint-Pierre, she not only had a more favorable reception but also one which took a form infinitely touching to her.

"I have been praying since I last saw you," her uncle said simply. He was an upright man, but he was not what is generally called a spiritual one. Therese gazed at him in surprise. She, of course, had been praying constantly herself, but she had not ventured to assume that he would have spent the interval of their separation in the same manner. "I have been asking to see my way clearly as to what I should let you do," he went on. "This clarification has come. It has been given me to believe that Our Savior wishes you to serve Him as you desire. Go in peace, my dear child. I shall oppose you no longer."

Having won this signal victory, Therese's next objective was the Carmelite Convent itself. Mère Marie de Gonzague had seen the young girl a number of times since the occasion on which she had so tactfully persuaded the would-be postulant that none was admitted at the age of nine. And so far as she was personally concerned, this eminent prioress was more than half-convinced that the time had come to open the doors of the convent to Therese. The decision did not rest wholly with her, however. It was necessary for her to submit to the sentiments of the ecclesiastical superior of the community, Canon Delatroette, a man of decided views and inflexible will; and Canon Delatroette was uncompromising in his attitude. He declared, with a vehemence which surpassed that which Monsieur Guérin had revealed, that he would never sanction the entry of any girl, whatever her temperament or talents might be, into a Carmelite Convent before she was twenty-one years old.

The constitution of the Order itself contained no such regulations, and the Prioress, not without sound logic and

a certain justifiable asperity, pointed this out to the Canon. He remained unmoved. Having failed in a direct appeal to reason, she next instigated an indirect appeal to sympathy: she suggested to Mère Genevieve de Ste. Thérèse, who had been the founder of Carmel at Lisieux and who was ill, that when Monsieur le Chanoine next came to the infirmary, it might prove a propitious moment to plead Therese Martin's cause. The result was another explosion, more violent than any which had yet taken place. "Why do you keep on plaguing me about this young girl?" he vociferated. "Anyone would think, to hear you all talk, that the salvation of the community depended on her. Certainly there is no danger in delay. Let her stay at home until she is of age! Do you suppose I have refused to listen to you without giving the matter prayerful thought? I forbid you to speak to me of it again!"

His response to the aged nun, which was duly reported to Therese herself, was certainly not reassuring. If she had actually been as shy as she has been misrepresented to be, she would hardly have bearded so formidable a lion in his den, but, as usual, she showed that she had the courage of her convictions. She promptly went to see the Canon herself, accompanied by her father, and far from shrinking away in dismay when he thundered out another "No!", she declined to be discountenanced. She continued to sit undismayed in his stiff little parlor, while the rain, which was pouring down in torrents outside, fell in great slanting sheets against the windowpanes, lending a touch of melancholy to a stubborn scene. The sight of her was unexpectedly disconcerting to the redoubtable ecclesiastic: there was something in her controlled immobility which suggested to his unwilling mind that she had qualities of inflexibility equal to his own; sooner or later she might manage to circumvent him. The idea was as appalling as it was astonishing, but before the visit was over, he had begun to accept it. Involuntarily, as he showed his guests to the door at the conclusion of a call which they had taken the initiative in terminating, he muttered, "After all, I am only the Bishop's representative in Lisieux. The real decision rests with him. Of course, if he should give his consent to this plan of yours, there would be nothing more that I could say or do."

It is easy for us, after all these years, to denounce this strong-willed pillar of the Church as hard-headed and hardhearted, to deplore his obstinacy and imperceptiveness. If we are candid, however, we will be moved to confess that, had we been in his place, our attitude would probably have been very similar to his. Prophets have admittedly been without honor in their own country-until acclaimed as such out of it-for over nineteen centuries, and angels have been entertained unaware even longer. It is the same with saints. So, at least let us set it down to the Canon's credit that he precipitated a plan which would not have entered Therese's head quite so promptly if he had not put it there, though undoubtedly she would have thought it out for herself sooner or later. Going down the steps of his house in a storm which by this time had assumed the proportions of a tempest, she was already beginning to think up a way for going to see the Bishop in Bayeux; and as a preliminary step toward conveying an impression of maturity on the occasion of this important visit, she began to experiment with new ways of dressing the beautiful hair which until then had fallen in shining profusion over her shoulders.

Once again, it is necessary to invoke the customs of a past generation to recognize the significance of this step and this time to invoke the costumes, also. Today, no distinction is made between the girl, midway through her teens, who has "let down her dresses" and "done up her hair" and her younger sister who has not, because no such distinction is possible; both wear clothes that are cut as comfortably short as their curls. But it was not until well after the turn of the century that this distinction ceased to exist. Up to then, the girl whose discreet skirts and multitudinous petticoats had

been lowered to her ankles, whose braids had been banded round her head or whose ringlets had been clustered on top of it—as the case might be—had already ceased to pause

"... with reluctant feet
Where the brook and river meet."

She had taken the leap across. She was no longer regarded as a child, either by herself or by anyone else. She had become a young lady.

It was as a young lady, then, wearing a long dark dress and tucking her tresses up under a jaunty little hat trimmed with two sweeping white wings, that Therese Martin started out for Bayeux on the last day of October 1887. Now the trip is made easily in less than two hours, and unaccompanied girls start out on it blithely in motor buses. But then it was a considerable journey, and Therese's father escorted her, since at that period no well brought up young girl went out by herself in France. Therese had traveled very little, never unless at least one of her sisters was with her; the expedition was momentous in more ways than one. Besides, she was somewhat overawed at the prospect of calling on a bishop, as, up to this time, ecclesiastics of such high degree had figured very slightly within her range of vision. Moreover, there were to be two dignitaries of rank, not one, with whom to cope. The Bishop himself, Monseigneur Hugonin, was already an aged man, of scholarly and retiring habits; he relegated much of his active authority to his vicar-general, Abbé Reverony. It was, in fact, through the Abbé that the appointment had been made; and it was he who received the visitors as soon as they had been ushered inside the episcopal palace and who conducted them, through a long succession of cold and formal drawing-rooms, to the study of His Excellence.

The study itself was less overwhelming than the drawingrooms had been. It "gave"—to borrow the expressive idiom of the French—upon a pleasant flower garden. The walls were lined with books and a cheerful fire was burning in the grate, and three comfortable armchairs were drawn up in front of this, toward one of which the Abbé motioned Therese as soon as the first ceremonies of greeting the Bishop had been concluded.

She hesitated, realizing that as there were four persons present, one of them would be obliged to sit in a small stiff seat which supplemented the three armchairs. It seemed to her that properly she should be that person.

"Come, come!" said the Abbé smilingly. "Let me see if you know how to obey! Obedience, you know, is one of the cornerstones of cloistral life!"

He had not spoken unkindly. But his tone was so light that it was evident he meant the entire interview to proceed in the same vein. When the Bishop asked Therese if she had already wanted for a long time to become a Carmelite, and she answered with an eager affirmative, the Abbé interposed another bantering remark. "Come, come! This cannot have been going on for *all* of fifteen years!"

"No, Monsieur l'Abbé. But there is not much to take off that. I have wished to consecrate myself to God ever since I was three years old."

Her manner was wholly respectful; yet there was a subconscious reproof in it. She had not come to Bayeux to jest. She was in deadly earnest, and she presented her case with complete candor and with all the grace of which she was capable. Her sincerity and eloquence merited more than a smile. The Bishop, slightly uncomfortable, in the face of her determination, as Canon Delatroette had been before him, observed that it would probably be just as well if she would be content to remain at home with her dear father for the time being.

He was under the impression that such a comment would be highly acceptable to his elder guest. It was, therefore, with surprise, slightly tempered with pain, that he listened to Monsieur Martin, as the latter, who had hitherto permitted Therese to do most of the talking, began to speak. He was about to take his daughter to Rome, the white-haired man remarked with dignity. They had the promise of being received at the Vatican. If Therese could not obtain the necessary authorization beforehand, she would not hesitate to speak to the Holy Father himself regarding her vocation.

More and more nonplused at the turn things were taking, the Bishop wisely brought the audience to an end with a few well-chosen words. A trip to Rome would be an excellent thing, he told his guests: it would give them time all around. The young lady would be able to make sure that she knew her own mind in the course of it. Meanwhile, on the occasion of his next official visit to Lisieux, he would confer with Canon Delatroette and Mère Marie de Gonzague. He would send them his definite answer in writing later. It would probably reach them while they were in Italy. Meanwhile, he ventured to suggest that a walk in the garden might bring their stay in Bayeux to a pleasant close.

No further reference was made to the cause of it, as they paced sedately up and down the neatly pebbled walks between the glowing flower beds, and half an hour afterwards, the vicar-general, still smiling, ushered the visitors from the episcopal presence. After they had left, he returned to the study to meet his superior's glance. It reflected the temper of his own, which was slightly satirical. A request, at one and the same time unprecedented and inopportune, had been made. It would be quite as well to temporize with it. Pilgrims, received in general audience, had no opportunity for personal and private conversation with the Pope. Besides, no one could possibly be more charming and more unassuming than the lovely child who had just come to see them. She would never be guilty of presumption. There was no occasion to take Monsieur Martin's remark seriously.

Like many other extremely able individuals, they underestimated both the tenacity and the will power of their antagonist. None of the sights which she saw in the next few weeks were lost upon Therese. Her own record reveals how keen was her appreciation, how comprehensive her understanding, of the wonders of Paris, Milan, Venice, Loreto, Padua, and Bologna, as the pageant of these princely places was slowly unrolled before her. Her feeling for the beauties of nature had always been extremely sensitive. Now, her feelings for art and architecture, hitherto dormant, were awakened, too, and the shrewdness of her observations on her fellow travelers disclosed that neither provincial life nor the inexperience of immaturity had obscured her vision. But, after all, this journey, enjoyable and expansive though it was, represented but one supreme opportunity to her: the chance to carry her cause to the highest possible tribune. It had but one main objective—the Vatican.

This is a structure so superb that even the most sophisticated, visiting it for the first time, are apt to find it overwhelming, especially if the occasion of their visit is an audience with the Holy Father, enthroned in a panoply of splendor. The manifold flights of broad stone steps which must be mounted, the suites of splendid rooms which must be traversed, alike seem endless. The statuary, the paintings, and the tapestries which adorn these are beautiful to behold, but their multiplicity is bewildering. Indeed, all the furnishings are so sumptuous that their grandeur becomes oppressive. Gilding gleams from the cornices and surmounts the draperies; a smooth sheen of malachite and lapis lazuli flashes forth from marble-topped mantels and tables. Nor is this stately panorama empty: Swiss guards in their particolored costumes, ushers in burgundy brocade, black-clad major-domos-these are the formidable figures which people it. The apparition of the Holy Father himself, white-robed, venerable and remote, dominates the vast scene with a personality which is at one and the same time mystic and puissant.

Such were the surroundings, such was the presence, into which the band of Norman travelers, already overtaxed both

mentally and physically by their rapid transit through Italy, were ushered one early rainy morning in November. They were shepherded by Monseigneur Germain and Abbé Reverony, ably assisted by the Bishop of Nantes, Sees and Vannes; and they met in the consistory, one end of which was occupied by a huge altar. On the stroke of eight, Leo XIII entered the apartment: fragile, emaciated, tremulous, but still charged with intellectual keenness and spiritual strength. A great cloak enveloped him, falling in full folds over the close-fitting white cassock in which his frail form was incased. His piercing dark eyes, glittering through the gloom, seemed to penetrate to the most secret places in the hearts of the pilgrims who knelt to receive his blessing. His fine hands, translucent as alabaster, quivered as he bestowed this; then grew quiet. He turned with deliberate dignity from the bowed band before him to the high altar where the acolytes awaited him; then he began the slow recitation of the Mass, bringing it to a close with the prayers which he himself had composed. Then, descending from the holy heights to which he had taken his hearers with him, he moved majestically into an adjoining apartment, where he seated himself on a throne to await their arrival and grant them audience.

The pilgrims from Coutances were the first to be received, in deference to their bishop, Monseigneur Germain, to whose initiative the audience was due; they were followed by the pilgrims from Nantes. Monseigneur Germain, in presenting the members of this flock to the Holy Father, mentioned the names and qualifications of each, and also the titles, in the cases where there was question of these, as there frequently was, for the group which he had gathered together was representative of the fine flower of Norman nobility. The Pope acknowledged these introductions with extended hands, a brief paternal greeting followed by a formal blessing, and the presentation of a commemorative medal. The ceremony proceeded with dignity and grace. There was no ripple on the lustrous smoothness of the pontifical waters.

As the pilgrims of the diocese of Bayeux approached, the Bishop of Coutances courteously stepped aside. The time had come for him to cede his place to Abbé Reverony, who represented Monseigneur Hugonin. The Abbé had been watching "the little Martin girl" during the course of the trip with the same shrewdness with which she had been making her own observations. Up to this moment, however, he had not been able to detect the slightest semblance of anything that might prove disturbing in her manner or behavior. Now, as she approached, slim, silent, sable-clad, her filmy veil of black lace patterning her bright hair, something impelled him to utter a sharp word of warning.

"Let me remind you that it is specifically forbidden to speak to the Holy Father," he said, audibly and imperiously.

The words were almost in the nature of a public reprimand for an indiscretion that had not yet been committed. They constituted another invitation to "kiss the ground." Therese met the challenge in a way characteristic of her. As she knelt reverentially before the Pope's throne and kissed the great ring on the luminous hand extended toward her, she said in a low voice, "Holy Father, I have a great favor to ask of you."

It is always the lesser natures which do not dare incline to grace: the Abbé had rebuked this earnest suppliant; the Supreme Pontiff did not. His frail form was still flexible: he bent over until his fine face was almost on a level with the one so unflinchingly upturned to meet his piercing eyes. Therese's heart leaped within her, and she spoke again.

"Holy Father, in honor of your jubilee, permit me to become a Carmelite at the age of fifteen."

The words were pronounced very quietly, lest she should seem to call attention to an act which was perforce performed publicly, despite its private character; but still they rang with the glory of the girl's faith. The Abbé, fearful lest the greatness of Rome might be moved where the provinciality of Bayeux had remained adamant, determined to preserve his

own dignity no matter how much humility he inflicted elsewhere in the process.

"Holy Father," he broke in arrogantly, "this is a mere child who imagines that she has the vocation for the life of a Carmelite. The authorities are giving the matter due attention."

The Pope disregarded the interloper entirely and addressed himself to the girl at his feet.

"My child," he said gently, "you must follow the advice of the authorities."

Again her heart leaped. He had not repulsed her, he had spoken to her, spoken with understanding and loving-kindness in his voice. She clasped her hands and gazed up at him entreatingly.

"Oh, Holy Father, if you would say yes, everyone else would be willing!"

"My child, you will enter a convent if it is God's will."

It was a pronouncement charged with wisdom, though tempered with moderation. But it is always hard for youth, striving instinctively toward swift action and swift results. to recognize the value of temporization, upon which age sets such high store. In the absence of an answer unequivocally affirmative, Therese did not venture to take too much for granted; she had not the presumption to assume that since she herself was convinced it was the will of God she should enter a convent there could be no further question that this was so. The joy was gone from her journey; Naples and Florence, Pisa and Genoa, had none of the glamour for her that had overspread every scene for her on the road to Rome. Only in mystic Assisi, where the spirit of holy Francis still seems to brood over the lovely landscape, did she recapture some of her forfeited peace of mind. Unforeseen contingencies of travel kept precipitating her into the company of Abbé Reverony, who was the last person on earth of whom she wished to see more at the moment. As a matter of fact, his conscience had begun, somewhat tardily, to prick him, and he was gradually becoming more and more eager to make amends for his inconsiderate treatment of her, especially as the more he saw of her, the more he was roused to reluctant respect. But she was not sufficiently egotistical to suspect it. With the extreme sensitivity of her nature, she continued to suffer in his presence.

It was the second of December when the pilgrims returned to Lisieux. Monsieur Martin had suggested to Therese that, if she would enjoy it, he would be glad to start out with her on another journey; indeed, to take her to Palestine. With his insatiable thirst for travel, it would have given him infinite pleasure to go, and—wisely aware that nothing is so hard to bear as uncertainty—he felt that such a trip would help to while away the time for Therese during the next months. But her mind was now too definitely set on reaching "The Garden Land" (24) of her heart's desire to have room for any other thought, and she rushed off at once to the convent to lay her troubles and perplexities before Pauline.

The advice she received was characteristic of the sound sense and practicality of mind which this beloved sister always revealed: The Bishop of Bayeux had agreed to give his answer in writing, had he not? Very well, since some time had now elapsed and the promised reply had not been sent to Italy, it might be well to write him and remind him of his promise. Therese might even mention again how greatly she had hoped to celebrate Christmas at Carmel. Perhaps it would do no good, but at least it would do no harm.

The letter was duly dispatched, and once it was in the mail box, Therese began to watch, with an intensity which no one who has waited in vain can underestimate, for the postman's coming, her eyes fastened on the familiar walk along which he unconcernedly took his daily way. Again and again she said to herself, "This morning the letter will come." Again and again she was obliged to repeat, biting

back her bitter disappointment, "It will be tomorrow instead." Her father joined in her vigil, knowing the sadness of one which is kept alone. The friendly postman came and went, but among the missives which he held in his outstretched hand, there was none stamped with the seal of the bishopric.

Christmas passed and still suspense hung heavily over Les Buissonnets, but on New Year's Day it was broken. A letter arrived from the Prioress of Carmel, Mère Marie de Gonzague. Monseigneur Hugonin had written to her, instead of replying directly to Therese herself, and the Prioress was prepared to transmit his message: The Bishop had considered the question carefully from all sides, and he would be glad to give his consent to the immediate entry of Therese Martin to the Carmelite Convent as a postulant...

Her fifteenth birthday came in and quietly slipped away. Still spellbound, Therese sat holding in her hands the letter which was the outward and visible sign of her own inward and spiritual grace. Mère Marie de Gonzague had added to the letter, stipulating that, in spite of the Bishop's decision, she herself felt that it would be better if Therese did not come to the convent until after Easter; but these words, disappointing as they once would have been, were now robbed of all sting. Therese read them, and rightly, to mean that the Canon must still be conciliated if peace were to reign between Carmel and its chaplain. The delay was to pacify his pride; it cast no reflection upon her own calling. Her will had indeed been God's. Since He was for her, none could be against her.

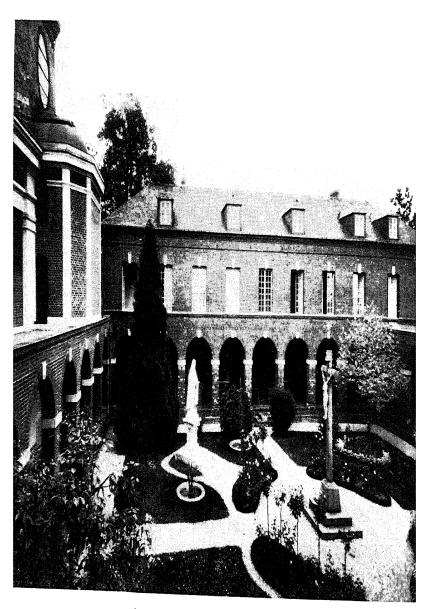
She spent the next few months with characteristic composure. She went to the Abbaye to say good-by to her former teachers and schoolmates, whom she had already been to see once since her return from Italy, taking to Mère Ste. Placide and one or two others some souvenirs she had brought them from Rome. More frequently and freely, she visited her aunt and uncle and cousins. She devoted long hours to her father.

For the rest, she set her house in order, both figuratively and literally. There was no disposition on her part to "take advantage" of her final months of liberty by having a "last fling." She wanted, instead, to pass them in preparation for the life she had chosen so deliberately and so firmly, and which now at last was closing in upon her, as the tranquillity of night closes in upon a radiant day.

Appropriately, on the last evening she was to spend at home, the little family, which had formed such a compact circle, gathered together in the restful living room that had been so pleasant a center for them all. The four Guérinsthe stalwart father, the sweet-faced mother, the two lovely young girls: these as guests. Louis-Joseph, Leonie, Celine: these, with Therese, as hosts. The high carved chairs were drawn up close together around the oak table, spread as for a feast; bread was eaten, wine drunk. The fire glowed and gleamed on the hearth. But the lamplight was soft, as it fell on Therese's bright hair, uncovered for the last time, and then melted away into yet softer shadows against the still wall. The armoire, the mirrors, the paintings, the porcelain, emerging from this gloom, took on that strangely vital aspect which in moments of great portentousness even inanimate objects assume. A blessing was asked, grace before meat. Afterwards, there was quiet talk of family things, of happy hours, of shared memories. Then hearts became too full for utterance, and a hush fell.

It was a prescient moment, a moment at the end of an era which had marked the making of a saint. The next day Carmel claimed her. All the rest is history.





GARDEN AT CARMEL OF LISIEUX

SEVEN

How is it possible to interpret the beatitude of a convent to those who have found it impenetrable? To the strident street outside, it presents a façade which is cold and blank. It is not unnatural that the average passer-by should be chilled and repelled by this, or that the guarded entrance, the mysterious Judas, and the inexorable grille, should also antagonize those who have not the intuition to recognize their significance. What such persons do not realize is that this blankness and this inflexibility are the indispensable safeguards of the seclusion essential for the contemplative life. If the exterior of a convent were inviting, it would continually be stormed by those who are superficial of spirit as well as of perception; they would come constantly clamoring for entrance, and there is neither time nor space for such as they within its walls. If there were no barriers to a convent, there would likewise be no escape from the very elements from which those convinced of their conventual vocation have sought refuge. The locks and keys are not designed to accentuate the incarceration of cloistered orders: this has been eagerly sought, ardently extended, deliberately perpetuated. "Stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage" to those who with dedicated hearts and deep-abiding faith have sought refuge in them. The locks and keys are to keep intruders out, not to keep a community in. A convent is not a jail—it is a haven.

For within the barricades there is infinite beauty. It is, first of all, the beauty of simplicity, of spotlessness, of spaciousness. The stairways and corridors of a convent are cool and clean. Their high pale walls, their well-waxed woodwork, their smooth-tiled floors, contribute to that universal sense of order and repose which finds still more complete expression in the quiet compartments to which they lead and in which there are no impediments to the clarity that sweeps through them and to the odor of sanctity that pervades them. A consonant system, a consonant tranquillity, unites these compartments, and each cell is distinctive. Its very barrenness facilitates the impression which the character of the individual occupant makes upon it and the awareness of the omnipresence of God.

Beyond the corridors and the cells are the colonnades, and beyond the colonnades is the garden. Even the convent sequestered in the heart of a city provides for some sort of a flowering plot, and a pastoral landscape is often engirdled by one more openly located. Saint Teresa of Avila was meticulous in her recommendation that the sites chosen for the nunneries which she founded should be pleasing. Her admonition is heeded to this day by the Carmelites, and the organizers and perpetuators of other orders have had the same understanding and reverence for natural beauty. The same restfulness, the same order, the same sense of peace, which characterizes the corridors and the compartments, pervades the open spaces, also, but their beauty has a warmer tinge. Light and shade are intermingled on the patterned pavements beneath the columns, and the rich roses surrounding the cross in the center of the inclosure are drenched in sunshine. The care lavished upon the flower beds sheltered by convent walls, which in their turn encircle the everlasting emblem of suffering and salvation, must be skillful no less than loving. The blossoms that grow in them should suit their surroundings, and they should serve also to brighten the infirmary and to adorn the altar. Hence there may be no blemish upon them, and the red rose in the garden of the living cloister glows with

rarer color than the one that droops over the tomb of the dead Cæsar.

But it is the human growth, the human beauty, that is after all the greatest glory of a convent. The casual conception of a nun as a cold and rigid creature, pale and wan of aspect, bound by dogma, obsessed by cult, is as unintelligent and superficial as the conception of a convent as a prison. "Heaven preserve us from frowning saints!" Teresa of Avila was wont to exclaim; but if there are frowning nuns from whom one might well pray to be preserved, I have yet to meet them. They are usually the personification of good cheer. Laughter comes easily to their lips; understanding shines in their faces. Their mode of living being simple and regular, they are also apt to be the personification of health. Composure of mind and body is part of their code. Their color is clear, their eyes are sparkling: they emanate vitality. The educational requirements of their profession are extremely high; and, this being the case, an exceptional degree of intelligence and scholarship may be taken for granted. Accomplished musicians and linguists, poets and painters, are frequently found among them, and it is not even unusual to find all these attainments vested in one and the same woman. Coupled with their physical strength and their mental attainment, there is usually considerable social charm, and all these qualities are crowned by the spiritual graces that are the dominant essentials of the true servant of God. In the entire course of my life, I have never seen a nun whose face was harsh, whose eyes were dull, whose bearing was vulgar, or whose expression was unillumined by faith.

This could not be so if their purpose were shallow or selfish: but their isolation is not one of egoism. True, they have sought seclusion, they have cleared away all clutter from their lives. Solitude is their watchword, contemplation their pursuit, prayer their calling. But they do not watch and pray primarily for themselves. Their orisons embrace the universe. The missionary, the priest, the physician, is constantly in their thoughts—all those who strive for the betterment of man and the glory of God; so is the sinner, the sufferer, the prodigal—all those who have forgotten that man is made in God's image. The worldly may draw on their aloofness for detachment. The perplexed may draw on their single-heartedness for charity. The hard-pressed may draw on their serenity for respite. The weary may draw on their tranquillity for repose. The anguished may draw on their beatitude for relief. The evil may draw on their goodness for virtue. In their persons and in their petitions they fulfill the belief which King Arthur expressed and answer the plea that he made as he left the last of his faithful followers:

"... But thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Therefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats,
If knowing God, they lift not hand in prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?"

It was into surroundings such as I have tried to interpret and into the company of such women as I have tried to describe that Therese Martin entered on April 9, 1888. She had risen at daybreak, putting on a dress of soft blue wool; then she had gone from room to room in Les Buissonnets, touching with lingering hands the familiar objects on which her eyes were lighting for the last time. Afterwards, she had gone into the garden, still fresh with early morning dew, and had walked slowly across the lawn and along the garden path. The thickets closed in around her, the great trees overspread her. Detaching herself quietly from them, she moved down the pebbly path by which Les Buissonnets is reached, passed the gray church of Saint-Jacques, crossed over the little bridge which spans the Orbiquet, and went along the narrow rue

Livarot. She was already kneeling in the chapel of the Carmelites when her family joined her there.

It was then a small and simple building, (25) bisected behind the altar by the grille which separated the sections used by the nuns themselves from the space open to the general public. It was in this public part that Therese knelt, her family and friends about her. Above the chanting of the priests, as the Mass progressed, she could hear the sound of stifled sobs. But her own eyes, which for so long had overflowed so easily, were dry. Her heart was beating so hard that she could not have wept; if she had, it would have broken with mingled joy and sorrow, for both were superstrong at this high moment. As the service came to an end, she rose and moved with dignity through the sacristy toward the great door rearing itself beyond, embedded in solid wall. She kissed her cousins and her sisters, then knelt again-not before God this time, but before her father. As he finished blessing her, the great impenetrable door swung mysteriously open and she passed through it, leaving her family overwhelmed by the irrevocable separation which it represented. But to her it seemed a portal of light leading into a cloistered garden, where Marie and Pauline-Sœur Marie du Sacré Cœur and Sœur Agnes de Jésus-were waiting to receive her, together with the Mère Prieure and all the members of the community.

Marie and Pauline were her sisters in the spirit now as well as in the flesh. The moment of reunion with them was therefore doubly poignant and doubly significant; like the garden and the cloister, it was bathed in beauty for her. They embraced her and so did all the members of the community—the new family whose "tenderness and devotion went all undivined in the world." But confronting the Mère Prieure, whose presence seemed more dominating now than ever before, was the somber figure of Canon Delatroette, casting a dark shadow against the lambent light of the morning.

He did not so much as speak to the postulant herself. She

had won and he had lost, as he instinctively feared might be the case from the beginning. But at least he would have his moment of revenge and dim the ecstasy of her triumph. He addressed himself cuttingly to Mère Marie de Gonzague.

"Sing a Te Deum, Reverend Mother, if you can! As the Bishop's representative, I present you with this fifteen-year-old child, on whose entry here you have been set. I hope that she will not fail to come up to your expectations. But lest she should, let me remind you now that you will have only your-selves to thank. I have taken no responsibility in the matter!"

It is a great tribute to Therese's own serenity of spirit that she did not permit herself to be upset by such an outburst. For nothing is so conducive to failure as the consciousness that it is expected, while nothing is so conducive to success as encouragement. If the last words that Therese heard before her entry to Carmel had been permeated with confidence in her, it would not have been strange that she should have risen to the great occasion by meriting them. As it is, the fact that everyone who saw her that day was struck by her graces is in itself almost a miracle, for she had a heavy handicap to surmount.

The chaplain's sharp words must still have been ringing in her ears as she was shown to her cell and installed there, but she gave no sign of having been cut to the quick. Instead, she carried herself with dignity as well as composure: she expressed herself as being charmed with everything she saw. Her glance fell caressingly on each detail of the habitation which was to be her own: the bare, clean floor, the narrow window, the hard, low cot, the earthen bowl and pitcher, the wooden bench, the lantern, the workbasket, the hourglass. When she was left alone at last, she sat with folded hands, gazing out toward the garden, her lips forming the words which rose from her heart:

"Now I am here for always."

It was an expression of supreme joy in a fact which hitherto she had not dared to take for granted, and from that day on this joy was never wholly dimmed. However, the period of her postulancy, as she herself afterwards confessed, was strewn with thorns rather than with roses. The mental attitude with which she was surrounded was in itself extremely trying. The community had, to be sure, succumbed to the grace which she had revealed, against heavy odds, upon her entry; but afterwards it steeled itself against this. A current of subconscious jealousy flowed against her, as it had at the Abbaye des Bénédictines; women older than she was, less lovely, less spiritual, found it hard to remain disinterested in the face of such great gifts. Her own sisters, their hearts yearning tenderly toward her, realized all too well that any display of favoritism would react against her and held themselves somewhat aloof. And Mère Marie de Gonzague, having championed her cause, now set herself to making Therese prove that she was worthy of such an honor by testing her self-control, her endurance, and her capacity for long-suffering.

She was set, like all postulants, to doing menial work. But she never seemed to be able to do it acceptably, so far as Mère Marie de Gonzague was concerned. Walking through the colonnade of the cloister with measured tread, the Prioress glanced superciliously toward the ancient walls and then spoke sarcastically to the Sisters who accompanied her, having first transfixed Therese by her piercing glance. "Look at those spider webs!" she exclaimed. "It is easy to see that our convent is being swept down by a fifteen-year-old child! What a pity!" If it were in the garden instead of in the colonnade that she met Therese, she was equally ironical. She was well aware, of course, that the Mistress of Novices assigned a daily stint of weeding to the young girl, and as this was always done at the same hour, it was easy enough to plan to encounter Therese. But she affected to ignore the details of the order and pretended that the meeting was a casual one. "Why," she exclaimed mockingly over and over again, "this child has absolutely nothing to do! What kind of novice is it that must be sent out for a walk every day?"

In private, she confessed that she thought the community had acquired a treasure in Therese and congratulated herself on her own perspicacity in admitting her to the convent. In public, however, she not only gave frequent tongue to passing sarcasms such as those just mentioned, but also on the occasions when the postulant remained in her presence for any length of time, scolded her almost continually, without giving the slightest indication of what might prove more pleasing. She was not a consciously cruel woman, but she was certainly a hard task-mistress. Vigorous, energetic, and thickskinned herself, she underestimated the degree of suffering which her harshness inflicted on a more finely fibered nature. She was well-born, well-bred, and well-educated, with a heart fundamentally sound and a personality that was on the whole agreeable, at least when she chose to reveal its more engaging aspects. She also had great executive ability. But she was exigent and domineering; and she made it the harder to follow out her wishes, because she so frequently changed her own mind regarding these. Unlike most Normans, she had no saving sense of humor. She saw life in a rigid pattern of black and white and not in tender or shifting shades. To a girl who all her life had been surrounded by fostering affection, she presented a formidable figure.

The Mistress of Novices, Sœur Marie des Anges, was a woman of very different type. She had an amiable disposition and gentle ways. Moreover, she had known and loved Therese from childhood, and she was solicitous lest the way should be too hard for the young postulant. Involuntarily, unconsciously, she herself made it harder. For she was absent-minded as well as anxious; she lacked the sense of system. Having decided that Therese needed more sleep, she intervened in her behalf for a modification of the rigid rules for early rising—and then herself forgot to give the final order which would have permitted the postulant to take advantage of these. Tardily recollecting herself, she made a bad matter worse by insisting that Therese should rest in the morning

for fifteen consecutive days. Mère Marie de Gonzague, discovering the postulant's prolonged absence from morning prayers, made this the occasion of another biting rebuke. "So the young lady is getting herself coddled!" Caught between the conflicting orders of two superiors, Therese did not know which way to turn. Sœur Marie des Anges also insisted that Therese should tell her every time she had a stomach ache, and Therese, unfortunately, was extremely subject to these. "When the pain seized me, I should much rather have been whipped than to be obliged to run and tell her, but I did so every time, because of obedience," Therese herself writes of this. (26) Sœur Marie des Anges who no longer remembered the order she herself had given, always said then, 'My poor child, you will never have the strength to follow this routine, it is too strenuous for you.' And then she rushed off to get medicine for me from Mère Marie de Gonzague, who, astonished and displeased at these daily complaints, retorted vigorously, 'This girl is always complaining. If she can't stand her little aches and pains, her place is not among us."

But if the efforts of Sœur Marie des Anges to minister to Therese's physical needs fell short of their merciful purposes, her efforts toward spiritual ministrations were even less successful. She underestimated the young girl's supreme need of "interior silence," of solitude and meditation. "During those first months, she imposed long exhortations upon her, of which the piety did not relieve the monotony." (27) She constantly intruded on that inner communion upon which Therese was so deeply dependent. In the end, her well-meant interference actually caused more anguish to the postulant groping toward the glow of spiritual life than all the asperities of the Prioress.

Under these manifold adverse conditions, Therese looked to the chaplain of the convent, Abbé Youf, as a natural tower of strength and place of refuge; but again she was disappointed, for he gave her only slender support. He was indeed a pious and righteous man, but he was in ailing health, and

his spiritual state was affected by his spiritual condition: he lacked vigor and militancy. He himself was deeply impressed by Therese, but he made little impression upon her. Her eager and ardent faith sought to merge itself in a flame stronger than he could kindle; again, she went questing for a confessor on whose learning she could lean and from whose force she could fortify herself.

There were few opportunities open to her which could afford such contacts. But, occasionally, some priest conducted a retreat at Carmel, and when this happened, she sought him out and tried to confide in him. Most of her efforts, however, remained unsuccessful, as in the case of the Jesuit, Father Blino.

"I should like to become a saint," she ventured to tell him. "I should like to serve God as well as Saint Teresa of Avila."

She meant, of course, that she was feeling for the way which she was later to find herself. But she seemed fated to find imperceptiveness. The Jesuit mistook her ardor for arrogance.

"What pride! What presumption!" he exclaimed in a shocked voice. "Content yourself by correcting your faults, by giving God no offense, by making some progress every day, and by moderating the boldness of your ambition."

"But Father, I do not understand why you should think me bold. Our Lord Himself said, 'You therefore are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father IS PERFECT.' Should we then not strive to do this?" (28)

Persons who persist in taking the Scriptures literally, and in making so thorough a study of them that Biblical quotations rise spontaneously to their lips, are often the cause of great annoyance and profound embarrassment to those of lesser faith and lesser learning. Therese at this time had been drinking deep of the Inexhaustible Wellsprings, finding in them the refreshment that her thirsty soul craved. The inadequacies and contradictions of translations troubled her, and she longed for a knowledge of languages which would permit her to read every tongue. "If I had been a priest," she said,

"I would have made an exhaustive study of both Greek and Hebrew, so that I might follow the divine thought, insofar as God has deigned to express it in human language." And in spite of her handicaps, she penetrated far into meanings mysterious to others. "She interpreted Holy Writ with a facility unprecedented among us," a member of the community has testified. "One would have said that these divine books held no secrets for her, so profoundly did she fathom all their beauty."

She found a tiny volume containing all four Gospels and kept it constantly upon her person, where she could read from it at all times. She also read the works of her patroness, Saint Teresa of Avila, and of St. John of the Cross, absorbing many of their doctrines; she read the *Imitation of Christ*, which from the time of Thomas à Kempis to our own has made the way to salvation clearer to those who truly seek it. But, as she said herself, it was above all the Gospels which supported her in her prayers; in them, she found all that was necessary for the sustenance of her soul. In them she constantly discovered new light and mystic meanings. (29)

She continually turned back to the Bible from other manuals of instruction and never with disappointment or disillusionment. "Sometimes when I read some treaties in which perfection is shown bound with a thousand fetters, my weak spirit tires very easily," she confesses. "Then I close the learned book which strains my mind and withers my soul, and take up Holy Writ instead. Immediately, everything becomes luminous in me again; often a single sentence opens up infinite horizons. Then the accomplishment of perfection seems simple. I see that it suffices to recognize one's own inadequacy, to cast oneself upon the goodness of God as naturally as a child seeks its mother's arms." (30)

To those of every creed and color whose Bibles have been their best textbooks, Therese's words ring true. Such persons recognize in her a kindred spirit with which theirs are attune, however humble is their own place in the heavenly harmony. And in her dark doubts, as well as in her shining faith, they see the troubles of their own souls reflected.

For she did not escape that universal impulsion to the cry of anguish which has so often risen from the stricken heart to the trembling lips of Christians throughout the ages—"I do believe; help my unbelief." She wrote to her sister Celine at one of these moments of deep depression, pouring out her soul. "It is painful to begin a day of labor, above all when Christ seems hidden from us. . . . Where is He? Does He not see our sufferings and the burdens that bear down upon us? If He does, why does He not come to console us?" And later, when she was making the final retreat preparatory to taking the habit, she cried out again. "I strive to find Christ and I find nothing . . . aridity—emptiness! But when I have nothing to offer Him, as tonight, then at least I can still strive to give! I know that He prefers to leave me in the shadows rather than to send me a false light that does not come from Him." (31)

There was no night so dark that some inner radiance of her own did not illumine it, no way so hard that her own fortitude could not brave it. She might exclaim, with St. John of the Cross, "The freshness of morning has gone!" and, as she did so, she must often have thought of that last morning at Les Buissonnets when she walked over the dewy grass under the sheltering trees; but, afterwards, she was always able to remember that garden in Palestine where death had had no sting and the tomb no victory. The admission might be wrung from her that she could "find no consolation anywhere, either on the side of heaven, or on the side of earth"; but, afterwards, she could add, "Nevertheless, in the midst of the waters of tribulation through which I was called to pass, I was happy." It was the qualities within herself-which alas! lesser spirits have lacked—that made these utterances possible and that were to sustain her faith to the end. They sustained her as the period of her postulancy drew to its end.

It had been prolonged past the usual length of time, due to the relentless opposition, still unabated, of Abbé Delatroette. But she had proven herself intelligent, obedient, discreet, and devout. At the end of nine months, even he could find no excuse for putting off any longer the moment when she should take the habit.

The occasion had a magnificent form. Her father desired that on this, his day of triumph no less than hers, she should reveal to the full his pride in her, his conviction of her ultimate vocation. "If I had anything better to give to God, I would present it!" he had exclaimed, speaking from the depths of his heart. Abraham offering Isaac, Hannah dedicating Samuel, did not do so with a more transcendent spirit. And it was fitting that this splendor of soul should be reflected in the raiment he bestowed upon his daughter, that this should be splendid, also. For nine months, she had worn the straight-cut dress, the black bonnet, and black pelerine of the postulant. On the morrow, she would be clad in the brown serge and coarse sandals of the novice. But on this day of days, she was clothed as became the most beautiful of brides. Her dress was white velvet, her veil fine lace, (32) her crown fragrant lilies. "How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou," (93) a great king had sung in exultation many centuries before. His words came echoing down through the ages as Therese started up the aisle on her father's arm.

Radiance seemed to stream all about. Unconsciously, the Bishop began to chant the Te Deum. A priest moved toward him and whispered respectfully, reminding him that this was reserved for professions. The Bishop motioned him away and went on. He needed no reminder of rubric to feel that on this occasion, only the Te Deum would suffice as a song of triumph.

Inside, the chapel was a blaze of glory. But outside, the ground was covered with snow. It was on such a night as this that Therese had come into the world—still, white, consecrated. Now, enveloped in the same transcendent purity, she left it.

EIGHT (

A GROUP of five young girls, greatly impressed, slightly overawed, followed the elderly, black-clad Sœur Tourière who had received them when the door of 37 rue du Carmel had clicked open in response to their ring. She had first looked them over, courteously but noncommittally, from her station behind the window of her tiny office. Then, nodding with the suggestion of a smile, she led them down a cool gray corridor and designated a bare and spotless parloir where a dark curtain was drawn behind a double grille with deep drawers beneath it and large knobs protruding from its outer lattice which effectually prevented too close an approach.

Not that any of the group would have ventured such an approach. They were all feeling so shy and awkward that they were half-inclined to leave with their purpose unfulfilled. The parloir to which they were accustomed was much less forbidding than this: the grille a single one, without knobs, the curtains behind nearly always pushed back. The habits of the Benedictines were familiar to them, since for years the Benedictine nuns had been their teachers, the Benedictine Abbaye their second home. But the Carmelite Convent—this was strange and chilling. Perhaps it would have been better not to come at all. But something had impelled them. . . .

It had all begun that spring day more than a year before when Therese Martin had appeared in the salle de dessin just as the drawing lesson was coming to a close. They had never thought very much about her while she was still at the Abbaye. She had always been lovely to them when they had come in contact with her, speaking to them pleasantly in that soft low voice of hers and looking at them with the sweet smile and the clear, deep expression in her eyes; but, after all, they had seen very little of her. Not to know what she was like, really. Then, when she was still in the Classe Orange, she had left school as a regular pupil, coming back only for lessons in domestic science, and they had seen less of her than ever. Not that this had been her fault. She had been withdrawn, of course. But that was because-well, to be honest, it was because they had more or less forced such withdrawal upon her. They hadn't understood her. But then, they hadn't tried to. And she had been so wise and fine about it all, and they had been so brusque and boisterous. Well, it was a pity. ... So it was not until she had come in one afternoon about four o'clock to the salle de dessin, after she had been away from school altogether for a long time, that they had actually seen what she was like. And then it was too late to do much about it.

She had come in very quietly, the way she did everything, and at first Mère St. Léon, who was questioning a pupil at the moment, hadn't even seen her. She had gone and stood patiently behind Mère St. Léon's chair. They could still remember how she looked as she stood there, because there had been something about her. . . . When Mère St. Léon turned and saw her, too, the nun stared at her as if she were astonished. Perhaps she noticed something extraordinary, also. Or perhaps it was just because Therese had let down her skirts and done up her hair. At least, this was what Mère St. Léon had said. "Why Therese!" she had exclaimed, as if she were very much surprised. "Why, Therese, you've done up your hair!" Almost as if she were speaking to a little girl who had "dressed up" for fun. And Therese had smiled, in that wonderful way she had, but she had said nothing—that is, nothing

in explanation. Just "Yes, Madame." Then Mère St. Léon had hesitated a moment, as if she would have liked to ask Therese something else. But, finally, all she had said was, "I'll finish with this pupil, then I'll go out with you." After a minute, she and Therese had left the room together. They had stood talking for a little while on the landing of the stairway that was right near the salle de dessin, but not near enough so that the girls could hear what was being said. Afterwards, Therese had gone away and Mère St. Léon had come back to the classroom without making any remark about the visit. But she had looked very thoughful. And by and by, when she went down to the playground, and the girls did, too, she stopped to speak to the nice Converse, Sour Marie-Marguerite, and Sœur Marie-Marguerite told her that Therese had been to see Mère Ste. Placide, too, and that it was a good-by visit, because Therese was going to enter Carmel. She hadn't wanted to say so in the salle de dessin for fear of upsetting Mère St. Léon in front of all the class. Therese was always considerate about things like that....

Well, after that the girls had thought about Therese Martin a good deal, and, finally, they had plucked up courage to ask if they might be allowed to go to see her. Mère Ste. Placide had said, why yes, they might have permission to do so once in a while; and during the Whitsuntide holidays quite a number of them had gone.

She was already at Carmel then, but not a novice, just a postulant. She had welcomed them as cordially as if they had always been as nice as possible to her, and she had inquired after all the teachers very affectionately. They had been very curious to see what she would look like, and they thought she looked a little queer, wearing an ordinary blue wool dress and ordinary shoes and with these a black bonnet and a black pelerine, like all postulants. She seemed to guess how they felt about this, because she said she was going to have something much prettier to wear when her sister Marie made her profession. And she spoke about the shoes herself. She said

they squeaked and that when she walked around everyone said, "Oh, here comes Sœur Therese!" It was plain she felt very badly about those squeaky shoes. Perhaps someone had scolded her about them. It sounded that way, though she hadn't said so. She hadn't complained about anything or anybody. She had answered questions concerning her life at Carmel quite nicely. That is, she had answered them very pleasantly, but without a great many details. And, finally, there had been a little hush, and one of the girls had tried to fill it in by saying, "How much you have grown!" And Therese had said, "Yes, and I am so glad that I have. If I hadn't, if I'd stayed small like some of the other girls, I don't believe anyone would have let me come to Carmel. I am glad, because I'm big enough to come."

Well, this was all that had happened that day, and nothing so very remarkable, either. Another day, she had sat with her hourglass and her workbasket beside her and had kept her eyes fixed on her sewing as she spoke. She had hardly looked up at all. But this hadn't made her seem any less attractive. In fact, a young man who had been with them that time, the brother of one of the girls, had been tremendously impressed by her gentleness and modesty. He kept talking about her afterwards, saying how natural and unaffected Sœur Therese was. And the girls agreed with him and admired her more than ever themselves.

So they had wanted to come back to see her again. They had wanted to terribly. They kept wondering why they hadn't made a point of seeing more of her while she was at the Abbaye. She was a wonderful person really. Such a wonderful person that though they weren't wholly at ease in this cold bleak *parloir*, it would be unthinkable, after all, to go away without seeing her. . . .

All five were so absorbed in their thoughts that none of them heard the slight sounds behind the grille: a stir, a rustle, a soft creak. They jumped a little when the sash was suddenly thrown open. It had ceased to be a barrier, it had become a frame. It encompassed a young nun with the white veil of the novice falling about her pure face and a great white cloak thrown over her arm. For a moment, she remained immovable, smiling mysteriously. Then she said gently, "Our Reverend Mother thought you might like to see my choir cloak. So she permitted me to bring it with me to show you." In one swift graceful gesture, the young nun swung her cloak about her. She stood before them draped in white from head to foot.

The vision was dazzling. The visitors beheld it with startled senses. There was something supernal, something celestial about it. The veil and the mantle seemed to shine; the nun's face was illumined, her gaze was ethereal. Close as she stood to the group before her, impassable spaces seemed to stretch between the apparition on one side of the grille and the schoolgirls on the other. For a long moment, profound silence engulfed the room. Then one of the girls, less overpowered than the others, found her voice.

"Please show us your sandals, too, Sœur Therese," she said in a hushed voice which she strove to make natural.

The novice took a step backward. Then she lifted her graceful draperies, revealing the *alpargates* of the Carmelite. Afterwards, advancing once more toward the grille, she lifted the cross that hung from her chaplet and held it up in front of her.

"But that is all you will see."

Actually, the words were unexpressed. The implication of them was so strong, however, that the day's visitors, as they left, could not believe that they had not been spoken.

It is thrilling to recreate this scene after all these years through the eyes of one who saw it; the awe of the dazzled schoolgirls pervades it still. But, fortunately for the world at large, we can, in a certain sense, see much more than they did of Sœur Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus, a nun in the Carmelite Convent at Lisieux.

Like her postulancy, her novitiate was prolonged. Again,

this was through no fault of hers. The same exterior forces of pride and prejudice combined, which had delayed her investiture, delayed her profession. But underestimating the power of these forces, she put the blame for postponement on herself. She aspired to saintliness; yet it seemed to her that she did not possess even the power for average well-doing. She tried to console herself with the thought that a cross, however inadequately carried, if borne courageously, is not borne unworthily in the sight of God. But the conviction brought her only cold comfort.

Like her postulancy, her novitiate was also a painful period. Her father had been stricken with paralysis. His fine mentality had been shattered by the stroke, and it had been necessary to send him to a sanitarium. The knowledge of his physical and mental state, which she could do nothing to alleviate, was a source of anguish to her, and it was all the harder to endure this because she was never free from petty annoyances. If she had been, her peace of mind might not have deserted her; but she shared the common thought of multitudes who find it is the little things that constantly prick and sting and from which there is no escape that hurt the most-not the infrequent shattering blows. She determined that no one should know how much she minded these, just as she had already determined that no one should know how greatly she suffered physically with the unmitigated cold, the pressure of manual labor, and other trying conditions imposed upon her by conventual life. But what this determination cost her cannot be measured in terms of words.

She had been brought up in surroundings of the utmost daintiness and order, and, subconsciously, she had taken the standards of gracious living to the convent with her. Now that she lacked every luxurious accessory, she attached herself, involuntarily, to the small objects which represented comparative comfort—the little lantern which burned so brightly, the quaintly shaped earthen pitcher in her cell. She was left alone in the dark when another sister took away her little

lamp by mistake, and a chipped pitcher was substituted for the one she had enjoyed. Burnt food and cast-off clothing became her portion. Since she did not complain about them, it was casually assumed that she hardly noticed the difference between these and fine food and fine raiment.

She learned to accept unmerited blame in the same spirit that she accepted bruising disappointment and humiliating indignity. She was accused of having broken a vase, carelessly left on an open window sill by someone else; with lips compressed to conceal their trembling, she promised to be more careful in the future. She went out of her way to make friends with the Sisters who were "difficult," with whom no one else could get along. As a postulant, she had been charged with the sweeping and weeding, as we already know, and she had worked in the linen room; as soon as she became a novice, she was put to service in the refectory, with its complementary duties of laundry work. Her sister Pauline-Sœur Agnes de Jésus-was in charge of this, and both bent backward in the effort to make sure that there should be no merited charge of favoritism. Indeed, on the contrary, a good deal of drudgery fell to Therese's lot, as it did to that of all novices. Much of the convent washing was done in cold water, as it still is throughout France to this day; (34) in the wintertime, it was she who took the shift at the *lavoir*, while in the summertime, on the other hand, she went to the boiler. She forced herself not to rub her hands together when she was cold, not to wipe the perspiration from her face when she was warm, not to drag her feet after her when she was tired. Once a Sister, helping her to fasten her scapulary, drove a pin into her shoulder: she did not even wince. Indeed, lest the Sister might suspect how much she had been hurt, she left the pin untouched until the time came when she could remove it unobtrusively. She had gone a long way from the little girl whose eyes filled with tears "almost too easily."

She observed every conventual rule for self-discipline meticulously, anticipated and expanded every precept for self-

sacrifice. Though still beset by a sense of her own unworthiness, she bent both her will and her spirit toward cleaving a pathway to Light. "I will wait to make my profession," she told herself firmly, "as long as God may require. Only I could not bear it if it were through my own fault that my communion with Him was indefinitely deferred. I will put forth my best efforts to weave for myself a shining garment of goodness incrusted with the precious stones of righteousness. When it is rich enough in His sight, He will not refuse to receive me as His own."

We cannot doubt that it was "rich enough in His sight" long before the authorities of Carmel recognized its glory. Being human, they "saw through a mirror in an obscure manner" though yet "face to face." But in heaven Therese's worth must already have been known; her name already "written"; and the time came, as it had come before, when her will-and heaven's-could no longer be thwarted. She made her profession on the eighth of September, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and ninety. The ceremony itself was not dazzling, as taking the habit had been, but the day was one of the utmost splendor. No still snowbound night, this, but a mellow morning when the light seemed drenched in amber. As the procession advanced, a great flock of swallows, sweeping across the glittering sky, suddenly swooped down and circled over the convent, skimming so close to it that their wings seemed to brush the walls. As the procession passed, the bright birds shot upward again and vanished into ethereal space. They had gone as quickly as they had come. But none who saw their flight did so unmoved.

Was it only the wings of birds which brushed over the convent that day? Or were there hovering angels, too, in that strange swift flight?



Nothing is hard all the time. There is constantly an ebb and flow in the tides of trouble.

From the service of the refectory, Therese was promoted to the service of the sacristy. No recognition of all that she had tried to do and be could have meant so much to her. The sheer linens, the fine laces, the vases used for the adornment of the altar, the sacred vessels, the Host itself-these were what passed through her hands now, the hands which had once been so white and smooth, but which had become red and rough with hard work. Sometimes, when her solitude was assured, she raised the Cup that she had cleansed and, gazing far into it, looked for her own reflection in its shining depths. She did this with the same reverence, with the same sense that her being was merged in that of her Savior, as when she had first approached the altar rail, a radiant child. And there were other high moments, also. It was she who, as the youngest member of the community, was called to place the crown of roses on her sister's head when Marie took her final vows. It was she to whom Mère Genevieve de Ste. Thérèse turned upon her deathbed. Not since she lost her own mother had she seen death face to face. Now, for the first time, she beheld all its majesty and understood its glory.

But there were other deaths to come, deaths which brought in their wake none of the dignity that had marked the passing of the aged Prioress. Late in the year 1891, influenza swept through Lisieux in its grim passage round the world. The convent was not spared—indeed, only two of its inmates escaped altogether. Therese herself was attacked by it, but lightly, at least to all appearances. She had hardly been stricken when she was up and about again, ministering to those more afflicted, assisting at three deathbeds. Canon Delatroette, administering the last rites, watched her with reluctant respect as she went serenely about her tasks of mercy and reverence. Had she given him the opening, he might have asked her forgiveness for his treatment of her. But she had long since passed from the realm where either apology or approbation from him meant anything to her.

As the epidemic subsided, and "spring came round again next year," she found, as so many persons do when they have pushed their strength to the limit and no longer need to do so, that she had a few empty hours on her hands. Another sacristan had been named, and no duties had been especially assigned to her in place of those which she had given over. At this point, the Prioress suggested that she might like to try her hand at drawing. She was naturally capable in this direction, as she was in so many others. "In the world," she would certainly have been successful both as a poet and as a painter, for she had the gift of imagery in words no less than in colors; and, though she had not had the previous instruction of her sister Celine, she now turned easily and instinctively toward palette and paint box. The results were astonishing. She began by coloring little pictures that were put before her; then by copying them. Presently, she began herself to create. In the midst of the general surprise at the discovery of so much talent, up to that moment "wrapped in a napkin," facilities for doing her work were made available to her. She was intrusted with the task of decorating an oratory. She undertook the work eagerly and intensively and showed marked ability in it. Naturally enough, her style was characteristic of the last decade of the dying century and hence slightly rococo, but it was light and pleasing and marked by fine feeling. Sœur Therese, who had been able to prove that she did not despise drudgery, was now able to prove no less incontestably how adaptable she was to the Arts.

For in the next year, her talent for verse also began to come to light. Even Ghéon, who, as we have said before, is the most satirical of her biographers, accords a tribute to her writing which carries with it great weight, coming, as it does, from so eminent a man of letters. "When her style has been stripped of florescence," he admits—or as a less biased critic would put it, when it has been simplified to suit the modern manner, instead of conforming to the best models of the time in which she lived—"one perceives that it is firm and full, pertinent and concise, nourished with the marrow of the Scriptures, shot through with lightning flashes in the manner of St. John of the Cross. It has purity, suavity, harmony; it reaches great heights, for it is allied to great things." (35)

This is high praise, and it is well merited. All Therese's verse has that rhythmic quality which makes it adaptable to the singing as well as the speaking voice—indeed, much of it was written with music in mind, to which it would be joined. It has fluency, too, and grace. It is easy to see that, upon request, Therese must have been able to turn easily to verse to celebrate any special occasion and meet any great need. So rare a gift as this provides unlimited resources. To its fortunate possessor, it affords extraordinary release of vital forces; to the immediate circle of such a poet, it represents infinite pleasure; to the world at large, an inexhaustible treasure.

In February 1893, the priorate of Mère Marie de Gonzague came to an end and Mère Agnes de Jésus—Therese's sister Pauline—became Prioress in her stead. (36) Wishing to show her predecessor some special courtesy, and also doubtless deciding that it would be best for her to have some well-defined outlet for her still abundant energies, Pauline named Marie

de Gonzague Mistress of Novices; but as her assistant, Mère Agnes named her sister Therese.

It was the first signal mark of public approval that she had felt it wise to give her, and even now the young nun was placed in a delicate position. She was barely twenty years old herself. Her sympathies, sensitive and susceptible always, went out to the novices. At the same time, she was in honor bound to maintain order and discipline, to act the mentor, to prove the example, not only as a matter of basic principle but also in order that Marie de Gonzague's hard-won respect might be retained and her sister's faith in her justified. It was during this period that her tact, which-let us say it in all reverence—was as great as her faith, stood her in good stead. She did not presume, she did not trespass on her superior's authority; yet in a surprisingly short time, she herself was Mistress of Novices in everything except name, for Marie de Gonzague had ceded all but her title. She knew how to laugh with her novices, how to relax with them. "Jesus loves joyous hearts," she told them. On the other hand, she knew how to reprove them and how to pray with them. She was eminently just, and this justice made a deep impression. Candid herself, she encouraged them to candor. She told them enchanting stories and told these exceedingly well, for as a raconteuse she was no less accomplished than as a painter and as a poet. As a matter of fact, she lavished the benefits of all her talents on them; she wrote verses for their fêtes, and decorated cards, boxes, and other pretty trifles as presents for them on their anniversaries. Strong as her hold was upon them, her touch was very light. She referred to her charges affectionately as her "little bunnies." The simile has a special aptness in Normandy, for there the countryside is overrun with small wild rabbits. Everywhere they are seen scampering through the fragrant fields in the sunshine and leaping, like little white phantoms, across the starlit roads at night. To the farmer they may seem like a nuisance and a menace and to the huntsman as slight prey, but to the happy wanderer and to the weaver of imagery they are a source of unfailing delight.

It was as a weaver of imagery that Therese saw them. She compared herself to a "small pointer which chased the game from morning until night." The Prioress and the titular Mistress of Novices were the hunters: they could not properly "glide under bushes," but a small pointer like herself—why, she could slip here, there, and everywhere, she could "nose things out." She "watched closely over her bunnies"; she meant to have them ready for the hunter when the time came. Meanwhile, she was careful not to frighten them away and not to harm them.

It was a charming fantasy. But it represented only her lighter moments, only the more superficial aspects of her attitude toward her charges. Her true sense of responsibility was deep and strong. "Savior," she prayed in secret, "Thou knowest also the needs of each one. Fill, therefore, my unworthy hands from Thy abundance in order that without myself leaving Thy holy side, I may be the distributor of Thy bounty."

It was thus that she interpreted the importance of her trust and the manner in which she could best fulfill it; and she never sacrificed duty to sympathy, even when her heart ached with tenderness. Once, having listened patiently for a long time to a novice who was pouring a lengthy tale of woe into her ears, she brought the recital to an instant close as the bell for prayers rang out. "God is calling you," she said simply. "For the moment He must wish you to suffer alone." But as her pure and fervent orisons rose to heaven, they were permeated with petitions for the troubled girl. At the end of the hour, the novice sought her out again, her tears dried, her quivering lips smiling.

"During the orisons, Sœur Therese," she said, "I felt a profound peace descend upon my soul such as I have never known before. I was not left to suffer alone after all. And I am not unhappy any longer."

The months sped by, full to overflowing. The popular conception of a convent as an easy retreat for the idle would be amusing if it were not so tragic. From six in the morning until ten-thirty at night, (37) each moment brings its own appointed task, except during the two hours set aside for rest and relaxation. It was during one of these brief recreation periods, close to the Christmas season, that Mère Agnes de Jésus and Sœur Marie du Sacré Cœur were moved one evening to permit themselves the rare indulgence of sitting down beside their younger sister, Sœur Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus, to talk intimately with her of times that were past; and, in the course of their communion together, she began to invoke spontaneously the spirit of days long gone by.

"Do you remember, Mother? It was like this. . . ."

Suddenly, the pageantry of half-forgotten Christmases, at Alençon and at Les Buissonnets, began to unroll before them. Again, they saw the crèche, the little shoes placed by the fireside for the Christ Child to fill, the "surprises" which were to give delight to the "baby" of the family—the best-beloved—their mother's smile, their father's benignancy. Again, they heard the sound of Christmas carols and the bells which rang in the midnight Mass. Some of the details had become dim to Pauline and Marie, but Therese had remembered the smallest circumstance. What was more, she brought it back to them: she clothed it in language that was rich and vivid and glowing. Her words rang out, she recreated. As she went on, kindling more and more to her subject, Sœur Marie du Sacré Cœur was struck with a sudden thought.

"Mother," she exclaimed, "you should ask Therese to write down these memories of our childhood!"

"But why? What would be the use?"

Mère Agnes and Sœur Therese spoke together. Neither of them could see. Therese especially protested. What importance could these personal reminiscences have to anyone except themselves? And, among themselves, they could talk again... Mère Agnes was inclined to agree with her. But Sœur Marie was insistent. The arguments which she raised were not especially cogent, on the face of them, but some presentiment, some intuition, of what her sister's words would some time mean, gave force and purpose to what she said. In the end, Mère Agnes yielded to her importunities. She ordered Sœur Therese, as a matter of obedience, to consecrate to the work in question what little leisure she had. The Prioress even set a date when the manuscript must be finished: January 20th of the following year, which was her fête day.

It was not without some sense of bewilderment that Therese began her task. She had never thought of herself seriously as a writer. Her little verses had been to her only the ephemeral expressions of the moment, and that she should be called upon to transform her childish reminiscences into literature was somewhat staggering to her. Moreover, no special time had been put apart for her undertaking, and, as she visualized them, her days were crowded already. There was no way of prolonging these, for the inexorable rules of the convent set the time when she must rise and when she must go to bed; and, in any event, these still gave her barely enough sleep. Besides, there were other difficulties. How could she write when her other duties called her out of her cell? How could she compose when she was half-frantic with fatigue? She did not see. . . .

Perhaps, only another writer can realize the hardships which she faced, for only a writer knows how fragile is the form of thought, how easily shattered the idea which must take shape and substance. It is only in long tranquil hours when one is undisturbed and unharassed that creative work can be done which will seem sound and ring true—or so there are many to tell us. Many others are even more demanding regarding the conditions under which they labor: they must write in the morning, when they are feeling fresh; they must write in the evening, when the house is quiet. They cannot bear noise, they cannot bear distraction, they cannot bear too

much heat or too much cold. They must have a comfortable chair, a commodious desk, just the right light, just the right amusements to provide for relaxation when the day's work is done. They must have very little food, but gallons of black coffee and—not infrequently!—many things much stronger than coffee. Others are still more capricious: only a lonely island in the South Seas or a high-perched garret in a great metropolis suits their spirit and proves their powers; they leave their natural habitats and repair to this or else no words flow from their pen.

These are the authors who have talent. The authors who have genius write anyhow, anywhere, any time.

Sœur Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus had genius. First, she knelt down and prayed that every line she wrote might be acceptable in the sight of God. Then, she rose and went into her cell, where she seated herself on her hard little bench, pulled a portable desk over her knees, and began to cover the ruled pages of a child's copybook with the fine tracery which was her natural handwriting.

The result was one of the most remarkable human documents that the world has ever produced.

The first part of it was written, as we already know, in accordance with the instructions of her sister Pauline and was addressed primarily to her. The style of this part is intimate and affectionate. It takes the tone, almost playful and childish at times, that characterizes normal family relations, and it is stamped with that slight floridity which was characteristic of the Mauve Decade. But nowhere is its extraordinary clearness dimmed; as a narrative it is a model of directness. And nowhere do the feeling and faith of the girl who wrote it fail to illumine its gracious pages.

The second part was written at the direction of Mère Marie de Gonzague, who was re-elected Prioress, succeeding Mère Agnes de Jésus; and, with the beginning of this, the autobiography assumes more majestic proportions. Here Sœur Therese is no longer addressing a superior who is also

a sister beloved both in the flesh and in the spirit; she is addressing a superior who has always been a formidable figure to her, whose rulings she knows are harsh, whose judgment she has found implacable. She redoubles her efforts, in the attempt to make these worthy of the standards toward which she must strain. She does not fail in the attempt. She surpasses herself. It is now that her style becomes "firm and concise." But it does not cease to glow. It has, at one and the same time, warmth and vigor. The combination is exceptional in the annals of literature in any age, under any conditions.

She skipped no services, she omitted no orisons. She did her sweeping and washing as required. She took her turn at tour. She painted little cards and little boxes and wrote little verses. She guided and instructed her novices. But, at the same time, the book went steadily forward. She had submitted the first part, duly finished, to her sister Pauline on the stipulated day. Then, almost without resting, she had gone on with the second. Marie de Gonzague fell in with Pauline's suggestion that Therese should be asked to do this. Perhaps, it was merely for the satisfaction of feeling that the lot in life of Sœur Therese should be made no easier under her than under her predecessor. Perhaps, because she also had an intuition of how much this biography might some time mean to the world. Let us give her the benefit of the doubt.

Let us also hope that, being in robust health herself, she was not predisposed to observe signs of exhaustion when these occurred about her. Otherwise, with every desire to be charitable, it would be hard not to condemn her. Some changes in Therese she must have observed. She must, for instance, have realized that an inner urge of great and tragic force had impelled the young nun to change—or rather, to supplement—her name in religion, Sœur Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus—that was natural, that was comprehensible. Everyone knew that the Christ Child had been a "living bright reality" to Therese from the time she had said her first prayers at her

mother's knees and placed her shoes on the hearthstone for the first time. But Sœur Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus et de la Ste. Face—that must represent some later, some deeper and more mystic experience. For the face of the suffering Savior, as imprinted on Veronica's veil, was not a symbol naturally or frequently chosen. What did it portend? Did Marie de Gonzague pause to inquire?

She should have had some warning, too, in the character of the care which Therese lavished on the statue of the Christ Child that was intrusted to her. On the eve of her profession, she had placed before this statue what remained of the same candles she had placed there on the eve of taking the habit. Sœur Marie du Sacré Cœur could not conceal her astonishment that her sister, who took such delight in the embellishment of the statue by every suitable adornment, should not have made use instead of the beautiful rose-colored candles provided especially for the occasion. Therese had answered significantly. "The other candles mean more to me. They began to burn the day I took the habit. They were fresh and colorful then. Our dear father, who had given them to me, was with me, and there was rejoicing on every side. But now the rosy days are over."

The rosy days were over... Did Marie de Gonzague not see it, or was she among those who are most blind because they will not see? Did she never notice how transparent Therese's delicate skin was growing or how her slenderness was declining to emaciation? Did it never occur to her to question whether "all was well with the child"? Even though the Prioress did not see her stopping on each step to recover herself as she toiled up the long staircase to her cell, did not anything tell her that something of the sort was taking place?

Apparently not. For in no particular was routine upset or discipline relaxed on her behalf. Lent came and drew toward its close, and Therese kept her vigils and her fasts like all the rest of the community. But at last one morning, she came and knelt before the Prioress, asking to speak to her privately.

She had gone to bed at midnight, having kept watch in the chapel until then. She had scarcely put out her lantern when a strange light liquid had seemed to come foaming up to her lips. She had dried them in the dark and had waited until daylight to see what the froth might be. Then she had found her handkerchief stained with blood. She had felt no pain and no fear; on the contrary, she thought she had been favored by some special grace. She had gone to Primes and to the chapter room as usual. Now she had come to ask permission to continue her fast.

The permission was granted. The day was Good Friday, in the year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and ninety-six.



Again, it is necessary to set back the hands of the clock in order not to pass judgment too hastily or too harshly.

In the nineties, the importance of abundant sunshine, abundant sleep, and abundant food as curatives for tuberculosis was but little understood, much less was their prophylactic value established. This was true even of the most advanced medical centers and of the great specialists of the day. It was even truer of the provinces and of general practitioners, and, above all, it was true of the layman and the laywoman. The proverb "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is indeed an ancient one, but its application to the science of healing is fairly recent. The same persons who can remember the funeral horrors, the "sick headaches" and the rite of "putting up one's hair"-to which I have already referred—can also remember the prevalence of "galloping consumption" in their midst, the mistaken methods by which it was treated, and the swift and dreadful end to which it brought its victims. Though the present generation has been spared much of this knowledge from personal observation, it is still readily available. Therefore, it ill beseems anyone to misinterpret the conditions under which Sœur Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus succumbed to mortal illness.

There is no regulation, either in the Carmel of Lisieux or in any other—since the rules of this Order are, of course, uniform all over the world—which prevents a nun from having proper medical attention. Doctors—and dentists, too, for that matter—have access to a cloister when their services are needed or at least when it is evident that their services are needed. In the case of Sœur Therese, she was, as far as anyone could judge, doubly safeguarded in this respect: her cousin by marriage, Francis la Néele, the husband of Jeanne Guérin, who was a physician of high standing, was freely admitted to see her, as well as Dr. de Cornière, the regular physician of the community. It is deplorable that they were sent for so tardily and that, having been sent for, the best treatment which they knew how to suggest consisted in massage, plasters, blisterings, and "pointes de feu." (38) But they acted to the best of their knowledge and ability, and their actions were in no way impeded.

All this must in justice be said, and it is likewise necessary to analyze impartially the reasons for the tardiness of the summons. Sœur Therese, as we know already, was courageous and uncomplaining both by temperament and by training, but she was too well balanced to carry consciously these qualities to excess. She had carefully considered the question of discipline when she had entered the convent, and, though she had followed the rigid rules for this inflexibly, she had never misinterpreted their true purpose and meaning; and she had never abandoned herself to any abuse of them. In like measure, while unpreoccupied about her health, she would not willfully have jeopardized it. If she had realized that her sufferings from constant cold, constant sleeplessness, constant abstinence, and constant self-denial would lead to the calamity of consumption, she would never have deliberately invited this. She would have asked for extra blankets, for extra food, for extra hours of repose, and they would instantly have been given to her. But she was no more cognizant of the connection between cause and effect as applied to symptoms and sickness than were most of her contemporaries. How should she have been?

Considering this, it is easy to understand that, having gone to the Prioress, as in obedience bound, to reveal the fact that she had—had a hemorrhage, Therese resumed her regular duties as soon as she had been given permission to do so. It so happened, that among these duties was the task of washing the windows in order that these might be bright and shining for Easter. One of the novices, more perceptive than Marie de Gonzague, noted her extreme pallor as she went about this work and begged to be allowed to take it over. Sœur Therese declined the offer. The next night there was another hemoptysis. This time she did not feel forced to say anything about it.

There were no further danger signals immediately. But a few weeks afterwards, she began to cough. Not constantly, not violently, but with that light persistent hacking which is so infinitely wearing. She did her best to stifle this. She did not wish to disturb anyone by it, much less to alarm anyone by it, especially her sisters. Until then, they had heard no details concerning her condition, though for some time they had been watching her with anxiety, realizing that she did not seem wholly herself.

The little hacking cough betrayed her. They questioned her and rushed at once to the Prioress, whom they succeeded in rousing. Marie de Gonzague sent for the doctors.

Their first examination revealed nothing especially serious, but wishing to be on the safe side, they prescribed the massage, plasters, and blisterings above mentioned. Fortunately, it also occurred to them to order a special diet. Adequately nourished and somewhat restored by enforced rest, in spite of the revulsions which she had undergone, Sœur Therese made a partial recovery. She stopped coughing temporarily—and resumed her regular occupations.

She had a doubly cogent reason now for wishing to be perfectly well: a new Carmel had recently been established in the French compound at Hanoï, Indochina, and a letter had come from there to Carmel of Lisieux asking for volunteers. Marie de Gonzague had instantly thought of Sœur Therese and had laid the proposition before her.

It seemed to her like the fulfillment of her heart's desire. At the back of her mind had always lain the half-formulated hope that her parents' longing to give the world a missionary might be fulfilled in her. But she had never dared abandon herself to this yearning—indeed, at one time she had visualized it as a temptation rather than as a calling. (39) In the course of her journey to Italy, one of her fellow travelers had lent her some missionary annals, and, after having accepted these with enthusiasm, she had later turned them over to her sister Celine with the remark, "I am not going to read them, after all. I have too strong a leaning toward the task of conversion, and I do not believe that my real work lies in that direction. I believe that instead I should enter a cloister and consecrate myself completely to the worship of God."

Later, she had found compensation for her personal renunciation of the mission field in her prayers for all missionaries and in her correspondence with two young missionary priests, Père Roullard and Abbé Belière, who had been designated to her as "spiritual brothers." Now, at the eleventh hour, the way seemed to be opening for her, after all. Surely, she need not hesitate to take it when it seemed to be so clearly marked. She did not venture to plead her own cause, but in her diary she wrote without reserve: "Here I am loved, and this affection is perhaps too precious to me. That is why I dream of a convent where I would be unknown, where I would undergo the exile of the spirit. . . . I long to go to Hanoï, where no earthly joy and consolation would be left, to suffer in the name of God." (40)

But though she was eager to suffer, she knew she must be able to support her sufferings, that she must be a burden to no one, but, on the contrary, strong enough to carry a heavy load herself. With all the will power of which she was capable, she longed to get well. She followed out her physicians' orders

implicitly. At the same time, she went on with her regular work.

It seems to us now that the result must have been a foregone conclusion. She held her own through the summer, but when winter came, she grew gradually weaker and weaker. At the end of a year, Dr. de Cornière, who, for a long time, had been buoyed up with false hopes which he had transmitted to his patient, confessed to her superior and her sisters that he could not cure her. He did not suggest that some other physician might succeed where he had failed. He merely added to his disconsolate statement that it was evident Sœur Therese was not long for this world. She must have known it herself, months before that. But it was not until drained of her last remnant of strength that she gave in and reorganized what was left of her life.

She spoke no more of Hanoï and the heart's desire which had, after all, been snatched from her when it seemed so sure of fulfillment; but she must have thought of it constantly in the dark watches of the night. Had she gone to Indochina, she might somehow have proved her purpose to herself and to her little world. As it was, she felt that she had failed to do so, and she knew only too well that others felt the same. Through the open window of her cell, she could hear, above the clatter of the dishes, the Sisters talking about her in the kitchen as they did their work. Her condition was no longer a secret: it offered a topic of conversation, when one was scarce. "Well," one Sœur Converse said casually to another, "it seems that Sœur Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus is going to die before long. I can't help wondering what the Prioress will find to say about her afterwards. Really, I'm afraid she'll be embarrassed, because Sœur Therese is very nice and all that, but then she has never done anything worth talking about." (41)

If this was one Sister's opinion, it was doubtless the opinion of many others: Sœur Therese did not soften the sting of it

for herself. She had tried hard, she had done her best, and that was all it had amounted to. At least, as far as the community was concerned. Had she succeeded better, as far as God was concerned? She had not the consolation of feeling sure of this either.

She had begged not to be moved from her cell to the infirmary. From the day that she entered the convent, she had attached herself to her own simple surroundings. The need of solitude had always been paramount with her, both in joy and in sorrow, and now she wished to "suffer alone." There was suffering enough before her, God knows. But perhaps she still did not realize how much.

The doctors continued their futile treatment of "revulsion." They had pronounced her case hopeless, and to the best of their knowledge and belief it was. But they could not conscientiously omit the trial of any possible panacea. What Therese's own revulsion must have been, everyone who has known the excruciation of similar torture realizes only too well. She was never without fever now, never without a cough, never long without hemorrhages. Still, she was not wholly confined to her bed. Much of the time she was in the garden, her portable desk on her lap. She did not write under duress any longer. Even now, however, she did not compose and create in peace. The novices and the Sœurs Converses who worked in the garden kept constantly running to her, obsessed with the common belief that a pen can be laid down as easily as a rake and with no more disastrous effects on the final results of the work at hand. Therese gave each one a smiling welcome, putting aside her copybook without the slightest sign of impatience. It was Mère Agnes de Jésus who finally gave vent to this on her behalf, and when that happened, Sœur Therese was ready in her response. "I am supposed to be writing about brotherly love," she reminded her sister. "Well, this is an instance when I can show that I believe in it."

It was sometimes in the garden which the cloister inclosed,



SŒUR THERESE AT THE TIME OF HER LAST ILLNESS

with the great cross in the middle, where she wrote; sometimes in the avenue of chestnut trees, for which she had always had a special attachment. Once, some time before, she had hastened to this avenue, at the recreation period on a spring Sunday: it was the only place left where she could still indulge her undying love for nature in its ampler forms. And when she had reached it, she had found that the trees had been pruned with the unsparing severity of the French and that their branches, already covered with fresh buds, lay withering on the ground. "In seeing this disaster," she wrote, "and realizing that it would take three years to repair it, my heart sank. Nevertheless, my disappointment did not last long. 'If I were in another convent,' I thought, 'what difference would it make to me if all the chestnut trees at Carmel in Lisieux were cut down instead of pruned? I will not let myself be upset by transitory things."

The trees had grown out again now, and they were lovelier and more luxuriant than ever, as it is their wont to be after cutting back. And though she would not be there much longer, she was still at Carmel in Lisieux, instead of in another convent far away, where palms, instead of chestnuts, would cast their shade over her path, as she had hoped and dreamed. An invalid's chair had been secured for her, which could be wheeled back and forth over the sun-dappled ground, and under the shelter of the trees she loved so well, she continued her writing. Her penmanship was less delicate now than it once had been; it was growing harder for her to handle her tools, simple though these were. The spaces between the lines grew wider and less even. But the record went on. (42)

ELEVEN E

The infirmary overlooked the avenue of chestnuts. Perhaps that was one of the reasons why Sœur Therese consented to be moved there when she was no longer able to go out of doors, when the little wheeled chair was parked, empty, under the trees. The moment had come when she could not get up at all. She had to lie down all the time; so she was persuaded to leave the little cell she loved so much and the bare hard cot where she had lain so long. She lay, instead, between cool, coarse linen sheets on a narrow bed draped with long white curtains—as spotless, as snowy, as virginal, as the bed in which she had slept in the long paved dormitory of the Abbaye des Bénédictines during the week before she made her First Holy Communion.

She was not afraid. She smiled, when she was questioned on that point, with the same ineffably lovely expression which had transfigured her face, from time to time, ever since her childhood.

"Death does frighten me when it is represented as a grue-some specter," she confessed. "But after all, what is it really? Not that in the least! So I do not think of it in that way. I think instead of the definition I learned in my catechism class: 'Death is the separation of the soul from the body.' Well, how could I be afraid of a separation which will divide me from earth, but which will unite me forever with heaven?" (43)

She was not afraid, but she suffered unspeakably. Her days were a succession of strangulations and suffocations; her nights were even more hideous. The prayer for delivery from "nocturnal phantoms" which she had once recited, tranquilly, at Complines became a cry straight from the heart. "If only those who are spared such anguish knew how their prayers are needed!" she exclaimed. But the words were wrung from her involuntarily, and they were coupled with the exclamation: "How fervently we should pray for all those in agony!" More and more, as her personal need increased, she was conscious of suffering humanity everywhere. Of her own suffering, she did not talk when she could help herself. She was very eager that she should not be a bother to anyone. She made no requests, far less any demands, as far as her own comfort was concerned. She did not even ask for an iced drink when this would have cooled her parched lips; she did not even ask for companionship when the hours of the night dragged out their endless length. She could not hold her pencil any longer, she could not move-often, she could not even swallow; but she could still pray, and she could still think.

That her prayers had always been powerful, no one can possibly doubt. She had prayed, as a child, for the repentance of a hardened criminal, Pranzini; on the very steps of the scaffold he had made his peace with God. She had prayed for the vocation of her sister Celine; their father had no sooner breathed his last than Celine had come knocking at the door of Carmel. She had prayed for small things as well as great ones, such as snow on the day that she entered the convent: out of a mild and shining sky, flakes had begun to fall. Her prayers were doubly sanctified now, but her thoughts, as these have been revealed to us, had a mystic meaning, too.

Her life up to this time had been curiously free from what, for lack of better words, we call "supernatural experiences." Many persons whose senses are attuned to the infinite in a way to which the multitudes are oblivious could confess to a greater number if they cared—or dared—to be candid on the

subject. But it is one which is usually veiled in silence. This is partly because the innate reticence of the refined precludes them from the discussion of any topic of such intimate and personal character, except with their nearest and dearest. And partly because a sensitive nature instinctively shrinks from the ridicule and incredulity with which, unfortunately, such disclosures are usually met. We are surrounded, every day of our lives, by the twin miracles of birth and death, which none of us can explain, but which all of us unquestioningly accept; yet when some other miracle, far less complex, is presented to us, we scoff at it. We willingly acknowledge that some human beings can, for instance, paint pictures, while others cannot draw a straight line; that some can build bridges and steer ships and sing songs with ease, while others are entirely inept when they attempt to do the same thing; yet we rebel at the idea that some human beings can see and hear phenomena to which others are blind and deaf. It is a curiously inconsistent attitude and one which does no credit to the individual who holds it, but it is singularly widespread, though there are signs that its prevalence is passing and it is no longer universally defended by science. The thinking world owes a great debt of gratitude to Dr. Alexis Carrel for the chapter on miracles which he has included in his recent eminent work, entitled, Man the Unknown; and, in passing, it is well worth while to note that more than fifty years before this powerful book was written, the Martins' own family physician, Dr. Notta, a comparatively obscure provincial practitioner, had been moved to exclaim, "Science is powerless before phenomena; there is nothing it can do in the face of them." (44)

The occasion for this exclamation was that of a vision which had appeared to Therese when, as a child of ten, she had been dangerously ill: the statue of the Vierge du Sourire—the Smiling Virgin—which had belonged to her mother and which had been moved from Alençon and placed before her own bed at Les Buissonnets, had suddenly seemed to her

animated. The smile which she saw became at one and the same time vital and celestial, the being which it graced, a radiant reality. Her sisters who were in the room with her when it occurred were also sensible of supernatural forces at work, though their eyes were sealed to the exact nature of these. And even the most skeptical, listening to a recital of the occurrence afterwards, were forced to admit the truth of one incontestable fact: the dying child had recovered. (45)

As a little girl, she had been granted only one other vision: her father had gone to Alençon on business, when she saw a figure resembling his emerging from the "little thickets" at Les Buissonnets. But it was bent and feeble and shaking, whereas her father was erect and strong and steady of carriage, and its face was covered. She screamed for her sisters, convinced that her "king" must have returned unexpectedly and that some evil must have befallen him; but the figure vanished before they could join her, and, shortly afterwards, her father came back from Alençon in the best of health. This apparition appeared in broad daylight, in the middle of a bright afternoon, when she herself was entirely healthy and happy; so it cannot be explained away as an illusion of the darkness or as a fantasy of a fevered mind. It was so vivid that she never forgot it, though after a time she was able to dismiss the horror of it from her thoughts. Years later, it was poignantly recalled to her and all her family when Louis-Joseph Martin, stricken with paralysis, frail, tremulous, and broken in mind as well as in body, persisted in covering his quivering features with anything on which he could lay his palsied hands.

Indubitably, the vision had been prophetic. Why it had been revealed to a child who—had she understood its true meaning—would have been shattered by grief is incomprehensible; she says so herself. But the fact that it occurred is incontestable. It had no connection with her other vision, either in time or in character, and she had no more like it. In fact, she had no more of any kind until early in the course of

her last illness, and then the revelation took the form of a dream, which she has vividly described herself:

"The tenth of May, just about dawn, I seemed to find myself, during my sleep, in a gallery where I was walking alone with our Reverend Mother. Suddenly, without knowing how they had entered, I saw three Carmelites garmented in their mantles and great veils, and I understood that they had come from heaven. 'Oh, how happy I should be,' I thought, 'if I could see the face of one of those Carmelites!' As if my wish had been heard, the taller of the saints advanced toward me, and I fell on my knees. To my great joy, she lifted her veil and covered me with it.

"Without any hesitation, I recognized the Venerable Mother Anne of Jesus, founder of Carmel in France. Her face had an ethereal beauty; no aspect of it escaped me, and although the heavy veil now enveloped us both, I saw that her celestial expression was ineffably illumined by a soft light which seemed to radiate herself.

"She caressed me gently, and, having been so tenderly received, I ventured to say to her, 'Mother, I beg you, tell me if God will leave me much longer on earth? Will He send for me soon?' She smiled benignly and answered, 'Yes, soon, very soon. I promise you.' . . . 'Mother,' I added, 'tell me also if God requires more of me than I have been able to do? Is He content?'

"At this moment, the face of the Venerable Mother became more resplendent than ever, and her expression seemed to me incomparably tender. 'God asks nothing more of you,' she said. 'He is entirely content.' Then, taking my head between her hands, she caressed me in a way that was inconceivably tender. My heart was filled with joy. But I remembered my sisters and wished to ask some favors for them, also. Alas! at that moment I awakened." (46)

This was another instance of a vivid vision (47) which was unique in character, at least as far as we know. So it is doubtful, for two reasons, if there were others like it. All of

Therese's writing was done for her sisters and her superior, with no plan either on her part or on theirs, until the very end of her life, that this writing should be revealed to the public. Therefore, she wrote freely and without reserve, and she would no more have hesitated to express herself fully on some further phenomenon than she had on those which had already occurred. Moreover, the Norman is not, like the Italian and the Spaniard, intrinsically a mystic. Mysticism is, in a certain sense, alien to his practical and powerful nature, and Therese was essentially a Norman, with the limitations no less than the gifts of her birthright. The quality that ran through every fiber of being in Francis of Assisi, in Catherine of Siena, and in Teresa of Avila, was not a predominant element in the being of Therese. The mystic way, devoutly pursued, is one of shining grace, but it is not the only way of beatitude, and it was not primarily hers. She had her own.

However, as she lay on her white-curtained bed, between the coarse, clean sheets—growing steadily weaker and weaker, suffering more and more all the time, alone with her prayers and her thoughts for endless weary hours—a change was steadily taking place in her inner consciousness no less than in her racked and shrunken form. The present, with its pressure and its pain, was fading into insignificance; the future, with its grandeur and its glory, was taking form and substance. The fear that in the sight of God her life and calling would seem meaningless had left Therese altogether: she had begun to glimpse the mission He had reserved for her.

"You will look down on us from heaven, will you not, Sœur Therese?" the Sister who was watching beside her asked her one night.

"No. I shall come down. . . ."

"To think they are still waiting for you in Indochina."

"I shall be there, presently. . . ."

There was no self-consciousness, no self-pride in the statement, only conviction of manifest destiny, only confidence in divine will. Her belief in these was revealed more and more strongly as the time went on.

"You will not be unhappy after my death. I shall send you a rain of roses to comfort you. . . .

"The meaning of heaven for me will be to do good upon earth. . : .

"I feel that my mission is just about to begin, the mission to make God loved as I love Him myself, to show my own small way to small souls..."

"What is the way that you wish to teach?" Mère Agnes de Jésus who was watching beside her, asked her tenderly.

"Mother, it is the way of spiritual childhood, of complete confidence and self-abandonment. I wish to reveal . . . that there is only one thing necessary here on earth: to offer to Jesus the gift of small sacrifices and the oblation of loving acts. That is all that I have been able to do; and only think how I have been rewarded!"

It was in the same spirit that she talked about her book, the book which at first had been merely an intimate, familiar record, but which now—without arrogance, but with illumined assurance—she had begun to see in a different light. Mère Agnes, aware of her sister's extreme diffidence, had hesitated to speak of her half-formulated intention to have the book read aloud, in community, and then to offer it for publication. She was intensely astonished to find that Therese in no way desired to oppose this public appearance, but, on the contrary, to hasten it. "Mother, after I am dead, please do not talk about my manuscript to anyone until it has been published," she said earnestly. "If you do otherwise, if you delay this publication, a trap may be set to hinder a very important work."

She had written one of the greatest books of all time, and she knew it—what writer could ask for more? She knew, too—with that innate sensitivity, even now no less unerring than her crescive prophetic vision—that a book, like a baby, is a personal creation, with which no alien hand should tamper

until the time when its divine and its earthly authors are ready to present it to the world. If l'Histoire d'une Ame had been read in community, there would have been a dozen different opinions as to how it could best be edited; its freshness, its spontaneity, its candor, its directness—all these might have been irreparably impaired. If its publication had been postponed, a dozen technicalities might have delayed this indefinitely - indeed, it had hardly been brought out when the averted imminence of these became apparent. Instead, it has been translated into every major language; it has penetrated into every part of the world; it has been the joy and inspiration of untold multitudes. If Sœur Therese had never been anything else, her place in history would be secure because she was the author of l'Histoire d'une Ame. But then if she had not been anything else, she could not have been herself.

"I feel that all the world is going to love me," she said with touching confidence to Mère Agnes, as she spoke of those who would read her book—and she spoke the truth. But there were many days now when she hardly spoke at all, when the effort of speech, like the effort of movement, was beyond her waning strength. She was shaken by such unspeakable pains, she had wasted away to such utter tenuity, that it seemed as if the tiny thread of life which she still held in her frail fingers might snap at any moment. She said good-by to her sisters, she received the last rites of the Church, and still she lingered, unreleased from suffering, month after month after month. . . .

"Mother, will it be today?"

"Yes, my child."

But it was not. Night came on, another night of horror. Then still another morning, more dreadful than any before—another noon . . . another evening.

"Mother, is this not the agony of death?"

"Yes, my child. But our Lord may keep you here still a little longer."

"His will-not mine."

Only Mère Agnes de Jésus, her own "petite mère," was with her now. And as this beloved sister sat, at twilight, her heart wrung with compassion, in silent vigil beside the small white bed, she was suddenly conscious that a subtle change was taking place in the pale face and still shape before her. With a quick, quiet gesture, she gave the order to ring the great bell which proclaimed to the convent that a soul was escaping its narrow confines for the wider spaces of heaven. Noiselessly the community assembled, noiselessly it entered the infirmary. Sœur Therese opened her eyes and smiled-at the sisters surrounding her, at the crucifix confronting her. Then the struggle began again. The Angelus rang out, and Sœur Therese opened her eyes once more, looking this time toward the statue of the Smiling Virgin which long before had seemed, so mercifully, to bring her life—would it not now, mercifully, bring her death? Another hour went by, and still there was no sign that it would. The community, at a second sign from the Prioress, withdrew.

"Mother, is this not yet the agony of death-not yet?"

She fixed her eyes on the crucifix again. Her breath hardly stirred, but for all that, her words came clearly and unflinchingly still.

"Father in heaven-I love you."

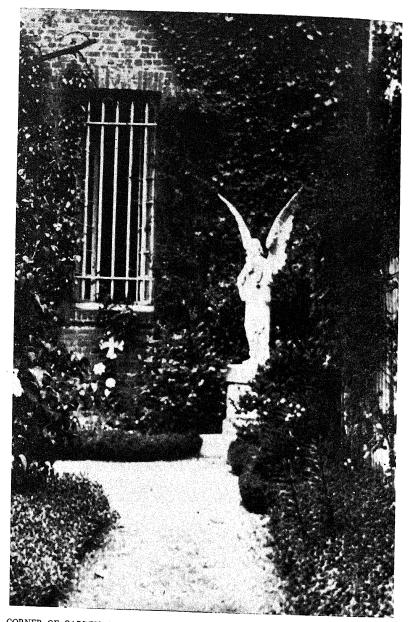
In her death, as throughout her life, her love was her supreme offering.



PART THREE



Harrest



CORNER OF GARDEN AT CARMEL OF LISIEUX SHOWING WINDOW OF INFIRMARY WHERE SŒUR THERESE DIED

TWELVE

When Sour Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus had died, all the community knelt about her and gazed upon her face. It was soft and lovely like a lily, with every trace of suffering smoothed away from it, and her form was flowerlike, too. Her sisters wrapped her in her long white mantle and placed a wreath of white blossoms upon her brow and a sheaf of palm in her hand. The wreath was like the crown of a queen, and the palm was like a scepter and both were symbols of victory.

Afterwards, she lay in the choir of the chapel, and many people came to look at her and none forbade them, for such is the custom of Carmel with its daughters when they have left it for Heaven. And there was no feeling that death was in the place. Instead, it seemed to those who came that there were perfumes sweeter than any incense in the air and a great beauty and profound peace. And when Sœur Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus had lain at rest in the chapel for some time and all who would had seen her, those who loved her most took their leave of her, and she was carried away from them to the green hillside above the city of Lisieux, which looks down on the quiet valley of the Auge, where all the loveliness of the Norman landscape is revealed.

There, in the midst of many tombs, is the inclosure of the Carmelites. It is small and square and walled about with mellow brick which is surmounted by a white picket. And each

grave in turn is outlined by a low, white wooden scallop. There are narrow pebbled paths between the graves, and, from the graves themselves, white roses spring in sweet and rich profusion. And the graves are marked by crosses, plain white crosses, with only a name and two dates printed on them in plain black letters. For instance:

SOEUR MARIE DES ANGES

1845

1924

MÈRE MARIE DE GONZAGUE

1835

1904

SOEUR THÉRÈSE DE L'ENFANT-JÉSUS

1873

1897

That was all there was for her at first, just as that was all there was for the others. A little later, to be sure, the text of words that she had spoken herself was written on her cross: "Je veux passer mon ciel à faire du bien sur la terre." But it was not there on that still October day when the rich Norman earth engulfed her body. (48) The little group which had followed her to her grave saw her simple coffin lowered into it, and then they went sorrowfully away, feeling that it was the end of everything.

But it was only the beginning.

Some skeptic has said—was it perhaps Renan?—"There will still be saints made in Rome—it is Rome's function to make saints, is it not? But there will be no more made by the people."

Before making cynical statements, it is well to be sure of one's facts. Renan may have been a man of genius, but he was a poor prophet, and his reliability is open to grave question.

For, in the first place, it is not Rome's function to make saints: it is God's function, and through His grace, the function of diverse human beings, who in their persons fulfill His purpose. They do not all achieve saintliness in the same way.

There are many different roads to heaven, and He leaves His children free to choose which they will take and reveal to others or else most clearly indicates which they should take themselves and which afterwards reveal. The way of Teresa of Avila and that of Therese of Lisieux are not the same, for instance. While both are beautiful, it is the "little way" of Therese of Lisieux that our own generation has most eagerly yearned to follow and that has seemed to open up most clearly and most comfortingly before the eyes of burdened men and women in this troubled world of today.

She had hardly died when it became evident that this was so. It was her book that first bore witness to it.

This book was printed, and sent-in lieu of the usual formal notice on the death of a nun-to every Carmelite convent in Christendom. Its reception was as different from that usually accorded to such an announcement as the vital story itself is different from a cold official document. Instead of being accepted with conventional courtesy and empty respect, devoid of any deep personal feeling, it was eagerly devoured, first in the cloisters to which it had penetrated and then by everyone who came into contact with these. Carmelites, it is true, lead existences more secluded than the religious of almost any other order, but they are not entirely cut off from their families and friends. They began to slip the book which had so enthralled them into the deep drawer which moves back and forth between the dividing line of a parloir: no grilles were strong enough to inclose it, no veils were dark enough to hide it. The relatives who had been intrusted with this treasure read the book with the same absorption, the same sense of rapture, as the nuns themselves. They lent it in their turnhere, there, and everywhere. Why-so rose the popular outcry-should this masterpiece remain in the possession of a favored few? Carmel at Lisieux was inundated with demands for it. It had no choice but to meet these. L'Histoire d'une Ame was put into general circulation, and it swept the world.

The consequences were manifold. That Carmel of Lisieux,

having first been besieged by would-be readers, should next become besieged by would-be postulants, was natural. They came flocking to its doors from every part of France, from Spain and Portugal, from Italy and Argentina, and many other countries. It was impossible to admit more than a modicum in Lisieux itself, but those who manifestly had true vocations, and were not merely swept away by momentary excitement, were prayerfully placed elsewhere. In every case they proved worthy of their profession, and, in many instances, they revealed such gifts and graces that it was evident the mantle of Sœur Therese had indeed fallen upon them.

That there should also be many converts to the faith which Sœur Therese not only professed but also embodied was likewise natural. People of all colors and creeds believe that "by their fruits you will know them." They can follow a modern model confidently and comprehendingly when distant doctrines only confuse them. Everywhere the mission field in Africa and Asia became enriched by new adherents to the Church. And not only this: Anglicans and Presbyterians began to find new beauties, new meanings, in Catholicism. Many of them embraced it, several clergymen among them. (49) Others ceased to misinterpret it. A better feeling began to spring up between groups where strain and dissension had long prevailed. They had found a common interest, a common inspiration, in the story of Therese of Lisieux. Their little differences, their little antagonisms, seemed paltry and unworthy in the presence of so serene and strong a spirit.

All this was indeed natural: no one was astonished by it, no one found it hard to explain. But many supernatural events began to occur, also: the sick were healed, the lame walked, the blind recovered their sight. (50) And with one accord, they acclaimed Sœur Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus as their benefactress. The cynical statement that no more saints would be heralded by the people was disproved on every hand. The popular pressure was such that Rome felt it was time to act.

For, though—as I have said before—it is not the function of Rome to create saints, it is the function of Rome, when occasion arises, to consider very searchingly qualifications for saintliness which seem to have been made manifest and eventually to pronounce judgment upon them, soberly, discreetly, advisedly, and in the fear of God. Rome does not suddenly say, as the uninformed seem to imagine, "People are getting rather tired of the old saints. Therefore it would be nice to have a new one. Let us declare tomorrow that So-and-so has joined the noble army." On the contrary, it goes about the process of canonization, which is preceded by the process of beatification, with careful steps and slow; and it does not even undertake these, in the first place, without overwhelming evidence that such a project is urgently indicated.

It was because such an undertaking had been so urgently indicated that early in 1910 the Sacred Congregation authorized Monseigneur Lemonnier, Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux, to instigate proceedings which would make a thorough research and report of the writings of Sœur Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus. In August of the same year, the first session of a *Procès Informatif* "on the life and virtues of the Servant of God" began in Bayeux. The question under consideration was as follows: "Is there certain proof of the heroism, of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, toward God and neighbor, as well as of the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, strength, and temperance and those related to them, in the case and in the effect concerned?"

The process was exhaustive from every point of view: from the number of witnesses called to it, from the fairness with which it was conducted, from the length of time it lasted. It was not until December 1911 that it came to an end. A year later, the Sacred Congregation issued a decree officially approving the writings of Sœur Therese; and two and a half years later still—June 1914—Pius X, the successor of Leo XIII, signed the decree introducing the "Cause" which would lead to beatification and canonization.

The most critical could not possibly call this a hasty process: and it was drawn out to lengths still unforeseen, when on the first of August, 1914, a great cataclysm of modern times descended upon a dumfounded world. For over four years, the First World War engulfed all the forces of mankind; but if any further proof were needed that a new saint had been proclaimed by the people, though Rome had not yet made this pronouncement, it was quickly found in the trenches. For Sœur Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus became, supremely, the soldiers' saint. "Of course, we have Jeanne d'Arc," one of these said, with a simple directness which voiced the feeling of millions, "but the little Sister is nearer to us." The cry which came straight from the souls of thousands of others was, if possible, even more touching: "Sister Therese, protect us, in the place of our mothers, who cannot be here with us today, as you are!—Officers of artillery gave their batteries the name of the young Carmelite; pilots baptized their planes 'Avion Sœur Thérèse'; entire regiments were dedicated to her. And it was not only the simple or the illiterate who thus invoked the one whom they called their 'second guardian angel' or their 'second sponsor.' . . . In the mud of the trenches, on the fields of death, beside beds of agony, they felt that she remained faithful to them, to the very end." (51)

This was the feeling, this was the faith, uplifting a great modern army—and, from the army, it swept around the earth. "She is called and she comes," a contemporary article says of Sœur Therese. "White, luminous, smiling, she reveals herself alike to innocent little children and to corrupt old soldiers. In secret chambers, she leaves her wonderful roses. She is invoked and a mysterious perfume, unbelievably fragrant, is distilled." (52)

Even if Rome had been unwilling to act, it could not, in wisdom, have refused to do so. But Rome was not unwilling: it gladly gave to its faithful daughter the honor which was her due. In August 1921, "the heroism of the virtues" of Sœur Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus was officially proclaimed by Benedict XV. In February 1923, his successor, Pius XI, handed

down a decree approving her miracles, a necessary preliminary to the ceremony of beatification. (53) On April 29th, in this same year, the ceremony took place in St. Peter's, among scenes of indescribable splendor and amidst demonstrations of popular rejoicing of which only those who participated in it can visualize the feeling and the fervor. Two years afterwards, all these "Causes," all these decrees, all these celebrations, culminated in the supreme ceremony of canonization: Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus took her place in the calendar of saints and on the altars of churches, as she had long since taken it in the hearts of faithful followers in every part of the world. Furthermore, in an Apostolic Letter sent out in 1944, His Holiness Pope Pius XII declared "Ste. Therese of the Child Jesus, Virgin, Carmelite of Lisieux, the secondary patroness of all France, with all the liturgical privileges granted national patrons." She was thus given a rank equal to that of Ste. Joan of Arc, who was made secondary patroness of France soon after canonization, the first patroness of France having, for centuries, been "Mary, the Blessed Mother of God." (53-A)

And in what, exactly, did the saintliness of Therese consist? She herself has described this quality in a general way by saying, "Sanctity is not such and such a practice. It consists in a disposition of the heart, which renders us humble and pliant in the hands of God, conscious of our own weakness, but confident to the point of boldness in the goodness of our Heavenly Father." This is the description that I like the best, which seems to me to reveal the most delicacy of feeling, as well as the most exactitude of thought. But there are other good definitions, also. Someone has wisely said, "A saint is a being whose personality is complete in every way." And someone else has still more wisely added, "Not only that, but they are the beings most wholly normal, since they have established in themselves the supreme triumph of logic, following this out to its ultimate consequences." (54)

Both these definitions may be properly applied to her, but there are many others. Strangely enough, some of the most vivid and convincing consist in a recital less of what she was and did, than in a recital of what she was not and did not. "Her life needed to be simple in order that it might serve as a model for small souls," her sister Celine, now Sœur Genevieve de la Ste. Face, has said, and one of her best biographers has expressed the same thought differently. "It was to this multitude of small souls, faithful to the core, but endowed with no extraordinary powers, that she hoped to reveal a part of the riches of heaven. If she did not desire extraordinary grace for herself, if on the contrary she desired a wholly simple life, it was in very truth because she believed that in this way simple souls would have nothing to envy her." (55)

Let us go into this question of simplicity, as she embodied it, in greater detail. "What was it that the Saint of Lisieux had within her which was extraordinary?" a brilliant secular writer, Maurice de Waleffe, has asked. "Her short and uneventful life was like that of a lily which opens in the morning and quietly closes at night. But what did she do? Very little. She wrote a book, or, rather, she unburdened herself of certain intimate confidences which Carmel gathered together into a volume and edited after her death under the title, l'Histoire d'une Ame. . . . And this soul proved to be so exquisite, so delicate, so worthy of adoration, that the whole world fell on its knees. The book was immediately translated into every language. Millions of the faithful read it with tears running down their cheeks. But it was not even necessary to have faith to understand that in it one is brought face to face with supreme human goodness, with nobility and beauty so rare that one is inevitably deeply touched. Let me conceal nothing: I went to Lisieux as a skeptic, I read this book, and I trembled in my turn with admiration and with deep emotion. That is the real miracle. There are souls so powerful that they can really create the object of their desire. One cannot approach them without being carried away on the wings of their fervor.

"Thus the ardent dream of a child has triumphed over dull earthly realities. 'Heaven for me will be doing good upon earth,' she said over and over again in her last agony. Whether one is a believer or not, can one deny that the votive offerings that are brought to Lisieux, the pilgrimages that are made there, represent sufferings that have incontestably been assuaged? The sacrifice of the little martyr has not been an illusion. And who knows whether the supreme secret of peace of mind, arrogantly sought by many in creeds and philosophies, has not after all been found in this young girl's doctrine of loving God and man as little children love them?

"France has given to humanity the purest soul that the world has seen since the time of Francis of Assisi."

I have quoted thus freely from great and wise authorities, because I cannot hope that words of mine can frame the thoughts so well expressed by my betters. I am not a theologian, I am not a historian, I am not even a scholar. Therefore, I am only too well aware how inadequate is my description of the steps which led to the formal canonization of Sœur Therese de l'Enfant-Jésus and the qualities which entitled her to sanctification. I am only an average woman. I cannot speak with the tongues of men and of angels, as I wish I might, for it is only those with such tongues who can describe her adequately as she stands crowned with roses and enshrined with glory, her name indeed written in heaven. Indeed, all along, as I have tried to interpret her life, I have been so conscious of my own shortcomings that at times they have almost overwhelmed me, at times I have hardly dared to go on with what I was trying to say. Yet, because nothing once undertaken in trust should ever be left uncompleted, however inadequately accomplished, I have persevered; I have finished the task that was set for me. And at the end of this story which I have tried to tell for those others who, like myself, are only average women, I want to say what I believe Therese of Lisieux stands for, primarily, in their lives and in mine.

I believe, first of all, that she stands for purpose. From earliest childhood, she knew what she wanted to do, what she could do, and what she ought to do. There was never anything indecisive about her. She stood squarely on her two feet

and faced the world. Even when all the world seemed against her, she was still steadfast. She fought the good fight, she finished the course, she kept the faith.

I believe that she stands for purity. By this, I do not mean merely the purity of the flesh—that she had this goes without saying. She was chastity incarnate, and the fact that she has so often and so truly been called the "Soldiers' Saint" and the "Man's Saint" should be proof positive to modern women who are cynical on this paramount subject that men never have and never will lower their ideals of the essentiality of this quality in the women whom they really venerate. But I also mean that she had that purity of thought and vision which is the highest form of sincerity, which sweeps away confusion and establishes clarity, which makes for single mindedness and single-heartedness.

I believe that she stands for resourcefulness. She was, after all, a girl of rather limited opportunities, brought up in a small provincial city, without great riches or powerful contacts or brilliant openings. She did not live very long, and she lived in a secluded way, even before she entered the convent. She never had any special chance to develop her natural gifts or to reveal these. Nobody taught her to paint or write, nobody stood by with bated breath shielding her from annoyance or interruption while she plied her brush and her pencil. But the city where she lived has become famous because it was her home, and the book which she wrote has become a byword throughout the world.

I believe that she stands for wisdom. By this, I do not mean that she was a learned woman as the term is generally understood. She did not have an advanced education, though she had an adequate one. But she read a great deal, and she read the best books that were available, and afterwards she pondered on what she had read. A great deal of wisdom can be acquired in this way. Besides, she thought things over generally. She did not act impetuously or inconsiderately, be-

cause she reflected on her course of action before she committed herself to it. It is always the wisest way.

I believe that she stands for loving-kindness. Little children turned toward her trustfully and were never deceived. The poor, the weak, the old, the helpless, the sick, the suffering—for all these she had abundant sympathy, and with them she established those bonds of understanding which come from compassion. There was no more condescension than impatience in her attitude toward them. And it is only of noble elements that true charity can be made up.

I believe that she stands for courage. There was nothing that could defeat her. She met the death of her mother undefeated. She met the misunderstanding of her schoolmates undefeated. She met the opposition of the clergy undefeated. She met the rigors of her postulancy undefeated. She met the dreadful suffering of her last illness undefeated. Even her own death could not defeat her. She prevailed. Her life was a pæan of victory to the very end, and the echoes of it will ring down through the ages.

I believe that she stands for faith. Not the faith that is beyond our comprehension, which never wavers and which never fails. But the faith that, in spite of all doubts and all anguish, triumphs in the end, because it stays fresh enough to enrich desert places, because it stays strong enough to move mountains, because it stays bright enough to illumine deep darkness—even the darkness of the Valley of the Shadow.

I believe that she stands for that sublime and supreme simplicity which has been so fully described already and that, because of this, we, who are average persons, if we study her story carefully and prayerfully, can pattern our lives after hers: at least, in some small degree, in purpose, in purity, in resourcefulness, in cheerfulness, in courage, in wisdom, in loving-kindness, and in faith. We do not need to feel that because she was a Norman and we are American or English or German or Italian that this makes any difference; the lessons

which she taught can be put to universal use. We do not need to feel that because she was a Carmelite nun and we are housewives or artisans, typists or teachers, social leaders or politicians, that this makes any difference, either; her basic principles are applicable to every walk in life. We do not even need to feel, if the form which our faith takes is different from hers, that this has set up an inseparable barrier between us. If we worship God as she did, in spirit and in truth, we shall find that we are not very far from her after all. The "little way" which she reveals to us is not an intricate one: it is not beyond our skill and our strength; it opens up to human beings everywhere.

I believe that, with God's help, we can follow it.



REFERENCES AND APPENDIX







- (1) Her own tentative title for this was actually l'Histoire Printanière d'une Petite Fleur Blanche, which makes the analogy even more complete.
- (2) Part of this christening outfit is preserved in the baptismal chapel of Notre-Dame d'Alençon, and the rest in the Salle des Souvenirs of the Carmelite Convent of Lisieux. A beautiful bonnet, bib, ruffled cape, and lace-edged chemise, also worn by Therese Martin when she was a baby, are displayed in the glass case which hangs above the mantel in the room where she was born.
- (3) This book, prepared especially for children, is one of the most charming I have come across throughout all my research.
- (4) Therese Martin's own room has been converted into a chapel; her bed and toys are in the alcove of the room originally occupied by her elder sisters. The furniture from this has fittingly been taken back to Alençon, for prior to the removal of the Martin family to Lisieux, it was in Madame Martin's chamber in the little house on the rue de Saint-Blaise where Therese and her sisters were born.
- (5) A tisane, or infusion, is an herb drink much favored by the French. It is prepared like tea and drunk instead of this.
- (6) There is no exact equivalent in English for the word when it is used as it is here. Literally, crèche may mean a crib, a manger, or even an orphan asylum. But it also means the group of the Holy Family of Bethlehem, shown as above described. Therese's conception of the Christmas crèche may still be seen at Les Buissonnets.
- (7) The color of Therese's eyes is most accurately described by the French word pers, for which there is no exact equivalent in English. It means blue-gray, distinguished by great clarity.

- (8) The Calvaires of Normandy, like those of Brittany, are greatly reverenced, not only—as strangers sometimes suppose—by the ignorant and simple but also by the learned and sophisticated. In Brittany, they are generally made of quaintly carved stone, and the crucifix is usually surrounded by supplementary figures. In Normandy, they are less elaborate and are usually made of wood.
 - (9) l'Histoire d'une Ame, pp. 34-35.
- (10) This dress is among those which her sisters carefully kept and which is now displayed in the Salle des Souvenirs at the Carmelite Convent of Lisieux.
- (11) Canon Cachelon—sermon delivered on the occasion of the gooth anniversary of the founding of the Abbaye des Bénédictines at Lisieux.
- (12) Some passages in a letter which Therese wrote herself, after her entrance in Carmel, to Mère Ste. Placide, confirm this conviction: "I can never forget, my dear teacher, how kind you were to me at the time of one of the greatest experiences of my life, and I cannot doubt that the signal grace of my religious vocation was conceived on that happy day when, surrounded by all of you, I first sought to consecrate myself at the altar. . . . I have been meaning every day to write you about my reception into the chapter house, but not knowing the exact moment which the Bishop would fix for this, I have kept putting off my letter. I hope, my dear teacher, that you have not taken this delay for indifference. My heart is always in the same place; indeed, I believe that since my entry to Carmel it has become even more tender and loving. I often think of my kind teachers and remember them in my prayers. I beg you to remember me most affectionately to them all, especially to the Prioress whom I hold in most filial and grateful remembrance."
- (13) Generally speaking, a Sœur Converse performs more manual labor than a Sœur de Chœur, does not proceed so far with her studies, and has not the same obligations for religious services. Her vows, however, are also perpetual.

- (13-A) This is the way Sœur Marie-Marguerite told me the story herself. However, it should be noted that, in her autobiography, Saint Therese says, "I did not know how to play with a doll," and that members of her own family have confirmed this statement, adding that she would have been no more at ease with a doll dressed like a Carmelite than any other.
- (14) Mademoiselle Louise Delarue, Mademoiselle Jeanne Le Prince, Mademoiselle Helene Hue, Madame Alexandre Perin—née Louise Bellenger—and several nuns at the Abbaye des Bénédictines who were formerly pupils there have greatly helped me in interpreting this period, as has also Madame la Néele.
- (15) This jubilee was celebrated on June 20, 1936, and a statue of Saint Therese presented by the Carmelite Convent to the Abbaye des Bénédictines was dedicated on this occasion.
- (16) In France, Thursday instead of Saturday is the weekly school holiday.
 - (17) Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux, pp. 82-83.
 - (18) l'Histoire d'une Ame, pp. 55-56.
 - (19) l'Histoire d'une Ame, pp. 66-67.
- (19-A) Years after hearing this description of Therese Martin's hair from Mère Ste. Marie, I heard another, almost identical, from a very different source: Monsieur Duchesne-Fournay, whose family has long been outstanding in political and social circles, and who himself has been a Member of the French Chamber of Deputies. This gentleman is the owner of Combrai, a magnificent château near the Monteillerie at Norolles-par-Lisieux. In the course of a neighborly call, Monsieur Duchesne-Fournay told me that when he was a little boy, the seats assigned to his parents at the Cathedral were directly behind those occupied by the Martins, and that his principal diversion, during long services, otherwise tedious for him, was in gazing with fascination at the beautiful golden curls of the young girl who sat in front of him. Illu-

mined by the shafts of light which streamed from the stained glass window, these took on added radiance. "I have never seen such hair before or since," he said. "It was simply superb." It would seem incontestable that the Biblical allusion to a woman's hair as "her crown of glory" was applicable to Therese.

- (20) Translated: Memento of my First Communion-May 8, 1884. Therese Martin to Louise Bellenger.
- (21) The children at this period addressed their teachers at the Abbaye formerly as "Madame" instead of affectionately as "Ma Mère," as later became the custom.
 - (22) l'Histoire d'une Ame, p. 75.
 - (23) Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, p. 135.
- (24) The literal translation of Carmel in the Bible is "park" or "garden land."
- (25) It has been greatly enlarged since the beatification of Therese, for the accommodation of pilgrims, and redecorated in a manner befitting its present importance.
 - (26) Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, p. 308.
 - (27) Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, p. 185.
 - (28) Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, p. 188.
 - (29) l'Histoire d'une Ame, p. 146.
- (30) l'Histoire d'une Ame, p. 370. It is extremely interesting to compare this statement with several made by Robert E. Lee. He and Therese Martin revealed in many instances both the same feeling for perfection and the same simplicity of faith.
 - (31) l'Histoire d'une Ame, pp. 315 and 342.
- (32) It was made of Point d'Alençon, the fabrication of which is so largely due to her mother.
 - (33) Canticle of Canticles, ch. 4, v. I.
- (34) The public *lavoirs* of Lisieux are among the sights of the city, as they are in so many other places.
 - (35) Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux, p. 158.
- (36) In the Carmelite order, the term of a prioress is for three years. She may serve two consecutive terms, but this is

unusual—generally there is an interval. Through a special arrangement, however, Mère Agnes de Jésus is now prioress for life at Carmel of Lisieux.

- (37) In summer, the rising hour at Carmelite convents is at five instead of six.
- (38) Apparently there has never been any equivalent to the *pointes de feu* treatment in England and America, for there is no translation of the term. The treatment consisted of heating needles and plunging them into the flesh.
 - (39) Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, p. 140.
 - (40) Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, p. 249.
- (41) After the death of a Carmelite, the prioress of the convent where this has taken place sends a biographical sketch of the deceased, with appropriate remarks, to all the other convents in the Order.
- (42) I have often wondered why Therese has never been designated as a special patroness of writers, no less than of missionaries. In all the calendar of saints, I know of none so fitted for this honor.
 - (43) Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, p. 344.
 - (44) Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, p. 112.
- (45) This same statue was placed in front of her bed in the infirmary of the convent. Her sisters had hoped that it would prove a consolation to her, but when she saw it, she smiled and said: "It is very beautiful, but it is only a statue now." For more than ten years her conviction in the reality of her first vision had remained undimmed.
 - (46) l'Histoire d'une Ame, p. 211.
- (47) As a little child, Therese once dreamed that she saw small demons scampering across the lawn of the garden in Alençon; and after the death of Mère Genevieve de Ste. Thérèse, this venerable mother appeared to her in her sleep, saying: "To you, dear child, I leave my heart." There is no record of other dreams of any significance, and these, like the visions, were wholly unrelated.
 - (48) This cross still stands, exactly as when it was erected,

except that it has now been incased in glass to preserve it from the elements. But the grave itself is empty, for Saint Therese is now entombed in the Carmelite Chapel at Lisieux.

- (49) Among these were the Rev. Alexander Grant, a Scotch Presbyterian minister whose widow is now the gracious hostess of the house on the rue de Saint-Blaise in Alençon, where Therese Martin was born, and the Rev. Vernon Johnson, an Anglican Brother, the eminent author of *One Lord, One Faith; an Explanation*.
- (50) A list of these miracles, thoroughly authenticated, is now included in the appendix of *l'Histoire d'une Ame*. What is perhaps even more convincing to the incredulous, the beneficiaries, most of whom are still alive, are not only perfectly willing but also extremely glad to repeat by word of mouth to any reliable interlocutor all that to which they have already sworn before official authorities.
 - (51) Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus, pp. 418 and 419.
 - (52) Sainte Thèrése de l'Enfant-Jésus, p. 416.
- (53) For beatification, the existence of at least two proved miracles is required by the Church. For canonization, at least two more.
- (53-A) This Apostolic Letter went on to say it was most fitting that, in those difficult days "of spiritual and temporal ruin," France should have the special assistance of the "Carmelite Saint of Lisieux" already constituted Patroness of the Missions by Pope Pius XI; and the following Spring more than four thousand American servicemen and women, coming from all camps in the Paris region, assembled with British, Canadian and Polish comrades in the Madeleine for "an allied tribute," organized by Reverend Richard F. Grady, an American Army Chaplain. Bishop Patrick Flynn of Nevers, former pastor of the Madeleine, preached the sermon at this ceremony and numerous high ranking dignitaries of both Church and State were present. The next Sunday the American Ambassador, Hon. Jefferson Caffery, and the entire Diplomatic Corps attended a Solemn Mass in Notre Dame at

which the Papal Nuncio Roncalli pontificated. This occasion marked the solemn proclamation of Ste. Therese of Lisieux as secondary patroness of France and General DeGaulle, in his official capacity as representative of the French Government, was received by Cardinal Suhard. That same afternoon. the casket containing the remains of the Saint, which had been brought to Paris from Lisieux by motor, was carried outside the Cathedral, borne by Carmelite Fathers, preceded by sixty seminarians and priests and forty bishops and followed by the Nuncio and the three Cardinals of France. A crowd, estimated at fifty thousand, had stood for hours singing canticles-in the Cathedral Square, on the bridges and along the quais, in response to a joint message from the Cardinals, asking the people of Paris to pray for "the total liberation of their territory, the return of prisoners . . . the pacification of minds and union of the French and a determination to live so as to restore to the country her prosperity and proper rank." Under normal circumstances, the proclamation of Ste. Therese as patroness of France would have been celebrated at Lisieux, but because of the widespread destruction and the limited transportation facilities, Mère Agnes permitted the removal of the body to Paris. As Chaplain Grady expressed it, "The Little Flower came to us because we could not come to the Little Flower." The statement might well be applied to many other occasions.

- (54) Le Carmel, pp. 51 and 57.
- (55) Sainte Thérèse de Lisieux. Une renaissance spirituelle, pp. 97 and 105.

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tist and man of letters, it should be included in any complete study of Theresiana.)

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INCIDENTAL TRAVEL

Lisieux (three months' sojourn)

Alençon Trouville
Bayeux Deauville

Authorities Personally Consulted

Monseigneur Picaud, Bishop of Bayeux and Lisieux Carmel of Lisieux

Visitation of Caen

Mère St. Léon, Mère St. André, Mère Ste. Marie, and Sœur Marie-Marguerite of the Abbaye des Bénédictines, Lisieux Madame Francis la Néele (née Jeanne Guérin)

Madame Alexandre Périn (née Louise Bellenger)

Mlle. Helene Hue

Mlle. Josephine Le Prince

